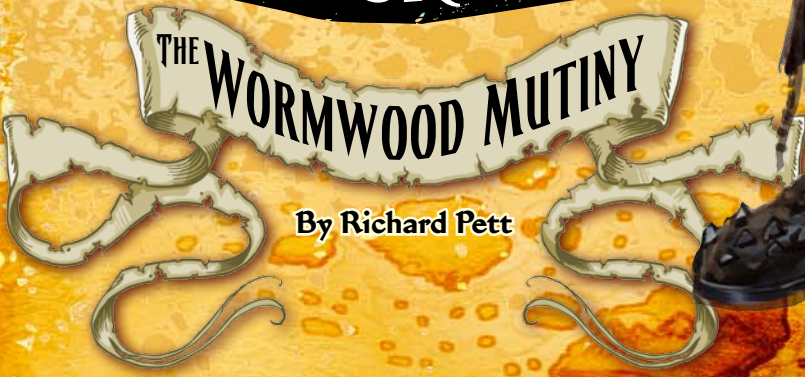


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By Richard Pett

THE SHACKLES



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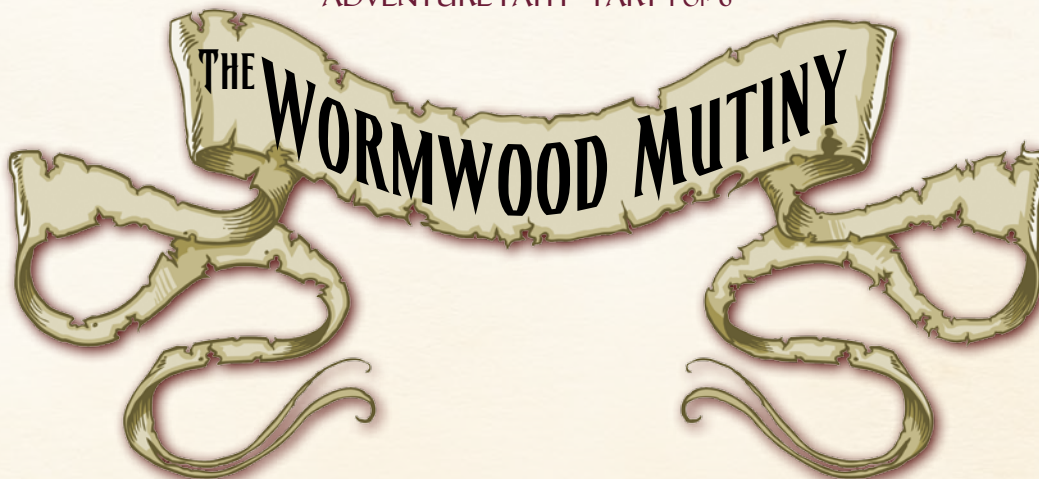
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ADVENTURE PATH • PART 1 OF 6





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BLACK-HEARTED MISCREANTS OR DARING SCOUNDRELS

Welcome to the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, where piracy is the rule, and plunder and infamy fill the seas of Golarion! In this month's adventure, "The Wormwood Mutiny," the PCs find themselves unwilling members of a pirate crew. The adventure assumes that the PCs all were in Port Peril, the capital of the Shackles, and that they fell afoul of a pirate press gang. They wake up the next morning in the hold of the pirate ship *Wormwood*, where the adventure begins. The campaign traits presented in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* (available for free at paizo.com) provide hooks for each PC that describe the circumstances of their capture.

It's important to manage your players' expectations for this Adventure Path right from the start. Most importantly,

they should all want to play pirates of one stripe or another. The PCs came to Port Peril to become pirates, to earn fortunes, to be adored by men and women, and live lives of fame—or perhaps infamy—at sea. They could be scurvy knaves who would slit a throat without a second's thought, or they might be dandy swashbucklers with hearts of gold in search of fame and glory on the high seas. Whatever course they choose, piracy should be in their blood. This doesn't mean the players can't play good characters, but they should be scoundrels, more interested in plunder and high-seas adventure than heroics and saving the world.

Likewise, you should make sure that your players are ready and willing for the unique challenges this adventure presents. The first part of "The Wormwood Mutiny" takes

FOREWORD

place aboard the *Wormwood*, a pirate ship filled to the gunwales with dangerous cutthroats, and the PCs wake up in the ship's hold as little more than prisoners, with next to no equipment. Played right, this can be a fun way to start an adventuring career, but your players need to be onboard with the assumptions of the adventure.

THE BIRTH OF AN ADVENTURE PATH

Although I've been the development lead on the past three Pathfinder Adventure Paths—Serpent's Skull, Carrion Crown, and Jade Regent—Skull & Shackles represents a first for me in several ways. Serpent's Skull, and to an even greater extent, Jade Regent, were the brainchildren of James Jacobs, and though I developed all of the adventures, it was James who outlined the Adventure Paths, and my development process involved a lot of consultation with him to ensure that the individual adventures matched his original concepts for the overall plots of the campaigns. Likewise, it should be no surprise that the Carrion Crown Adventure Path and all of its gothic horror was Wes Schneider's baby, once again requiring significant contribution on his part during the development process.

But with Skull & Shackles, I finally get an Adventure Path all my own. Just as James created Ameiko Kaijitsu way back in *Pathfinder #1* in preparation for eventual reappearance in the Jade Regent Adventure Path, and as Wes had originally created the nation of Ustalav to be a setting for what would eventually become the Carrion Crown Adventure Path, I've wanted to work on a pirate AP since my very first freelance assignment for Paizo, when I got the opportunity to write four of the countries detailed in the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting*, including the pirate isles of the Shackles.

As we brainstormed ideas for the Adventure Path to follow Jade Regent, I threw out my pirates idea, and was apparently passionate enough about it to get the rest of the team excited about it as well. Since this was a new idea, of course, and not one of the secret projects held and nurtured for years in the minds of James and Wes, it fell to me to do all of background work to get this AP off the ground. I made copious notes, wrote an outline, and with lots of feedback from the rest of the team, revised it several times, until we had the best ideas that incorporated all of the pirate themes we all know and love from fiction and movies: attacking ships at sea, raiding coastal settlements, naval combat, digging for buried treasure, being marooned on a deserted island, ghost ships, storms, sea serpents, sunken ships, and many, many more.

At the same time, of course, I got the chance to populate the Adventure Path with characters I had created back when I first wrote about the Shackles. James may have Ameiko, and Wes has Ailson Kindler, but now Tessa Fairwind, Avimar Sorrinash, Arronax Endymion, and the

ON THE COVER

This month's cover gives us the notorious Free Captain of the Shackles Barnabas Harrigan, captain of the pirate ship *Wormwood*. Although he is destined to become one of the PCs' greatest rivals in their quests to become Free Captains in their own right, the PCs will have to wait until they're more infamous pirates themselves before they're ready to face him. For now, Harrigan is just a figure to be hated and reviled, the tyrannical captain who holds the PCs' fates in his hands.

Master of the Gales will get their time in the spotlight as well, not to mention new characters such as Captain Barnabas Harrigan, the despicable Mr. Plugg, and Isabella "Inkskin" Locke.

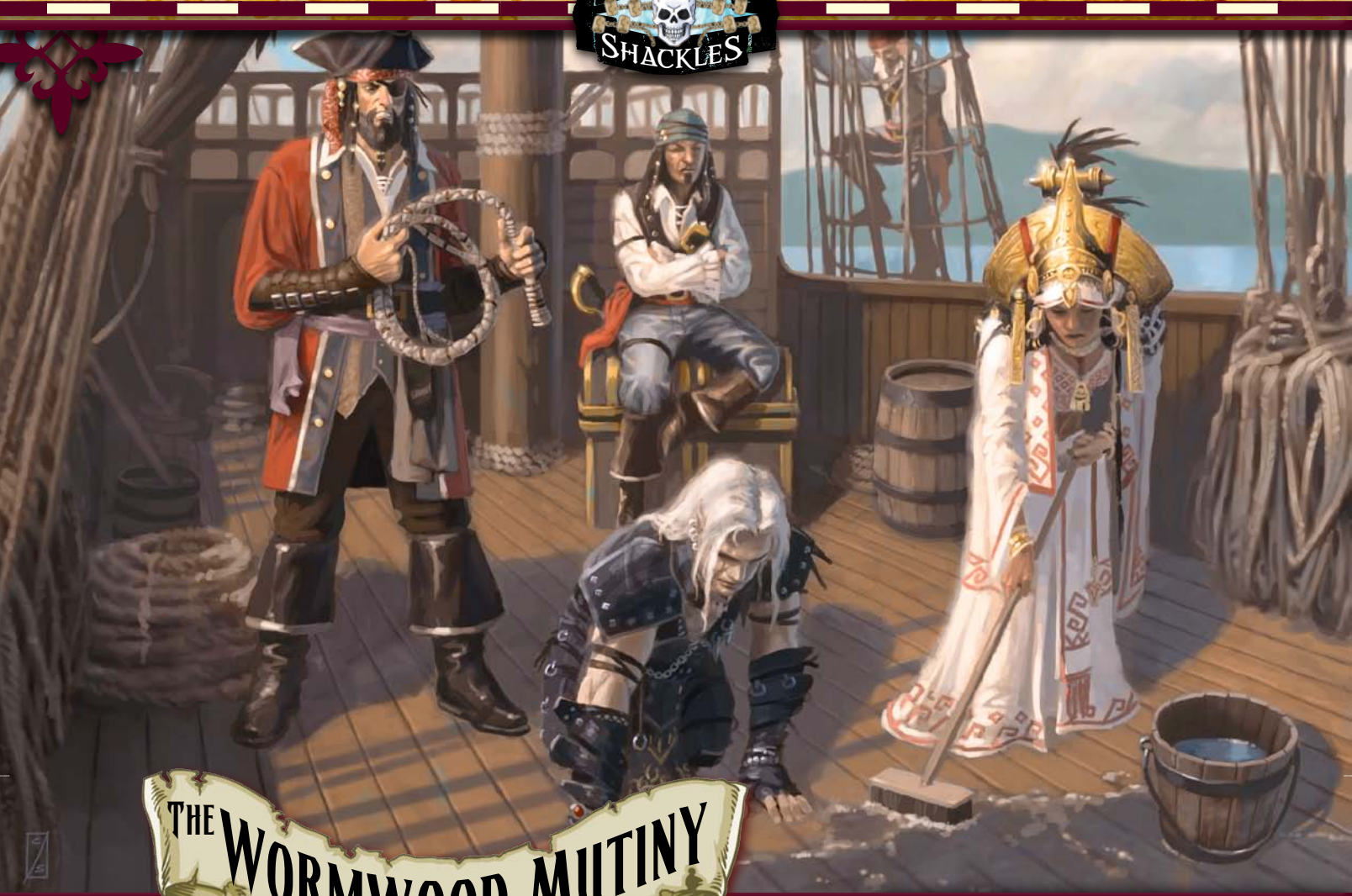
But an outline is only the first step. I still needed authors for the six adventures of Skull & Shackles. As usual, our freelancers stepped up to plate, with Richard Pett taking the helm of the first installment, "The Wormwood Mutiny." I don't know if it's because of "Rule, Britannia!", or maybe because I've read too many Horatio Hornblower novels, but it seemed fitting that an Englishman should write our inaugural high-seas adventure, and Mr. Pett has done an outstanding job. Perennial Adventure Path author Greg Vaughan has also stepped in, as well as two RPG Superstars, Neil Spicer and Matt Goodall. And finally, stalwart adventure writers Tim Hitchcock and Jason Nelson agreed to round out the all-star cast of authors.

If you're reading this foreword, it means the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path has finally been born, and is set to lead a full and adventurous life at the table of you and your players. Skull & Shackles might be my baby, but I leave it now in your capable hands, to create tales of swashbuckling adventure and piratical legend for years to come. As always, stop by the messageboards at paizo.com to tell us what you think and how the campaign has turned out in your game, or to get more ideas from other great GMs running the Adventure Path.

So down your cup of grog, hoist the sails, and set a steady course for the Shackles, where plunder and infamy galore await those who can seize it!

ROB

Rob McCreary
Developer
rob@paizo.com



THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

PART ONE: THE WORMWOOD

The PCs get a firsthand look at the life of a pirate when they wake up in the hold of a pirate ship and are forced to join its crew of cutthroats and scoundrels.

PAGE 7

PART TWO: THE MAN'S PROMISE

The PCs get their first taste of real piracy when their ship attacks a merchant vessel and they are assigned to the skeleton crew that will sail the captured ship back to port.

PAGE 31

PART THREE: BONEWRACK ISLE

Driven aground in a terrible storm, the PCs must explore a tropical island in search of missing crewmates and supplies for their ship, before seizing both the ship and their own destinies.

PAGE 39

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“The Wormwood Mutiny” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 1** The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2** When the *Wormwood* attacks the *Man's Promise*, the PCs should be 2nd level.
- 3** The PCs should be 3rd level before they descend into Riptide Cove.

The PCs should be 4th level by the adventure's end.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Free Captains of the Shackles have long been a thorn in the sides of the nations of the Inner Sea, and no country has chafed under their predations as much as Chelixa. Unfortunately, removing the threat of the pirates by invasion is made almost impossible by the howling winds and treacherous currents of the Eye of Abendego, the permanent hurricane that rages just north of the Shackles. Since the defeat of two Chelish fleets in 4643 and 4660 AR, respectively, the House of Thrune has longed for revenge and the chance to eliminate the pirate confederacy once and for all.

This chance finally presented itself when the Chelish navy recently captured Barnabas Harrigan, a Free Captain of the Shackles who had long plagued Chelish merchant shipping in the Inner Sea and Arcadian Ocean. Facing execution for his crimes and the scuttling of his ship *Wormwood*, Harrigan offered Chelixa a deal—if they gave him immunity from his past crimes, he would lead a Chelish fleet to the Shackles to put an end to the threat of the pirate confederacy once and for all. And once he had handed the Shackles over to Chelixa, perhaps Harrigan could get himself appointed governor of the new Chelish colony there.

But such plans take time, and Harrigan needed to solidify his own position in the hierarchy of the Free Captains before he could seize power following the Chelish invasion, all the while ensuring that no word got out of his treachery. Fortunately, with the exception of a few close confidantes of the captain, the *Wormwood's* crew was decimated in the battle with the Chelish navy, but Harrigan needed to replenish his crew with fresh bodies. He returned to Port Peril, the rough-and-tumble capital of the Shackles, to press-gang new hands for his ship—including the PCs, who now find themselves members of his crew of scoundrels and cutthroats. With a hold full of impressed sailors, the *Wormwood* left Port Peril and headed for the open sea, where Harrigan will put his plans into motion. Harrigan's new crew, including the PCs, need to quickly adapt to life on a pirate ship, or suffer the harsh consequences of pirate justice.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Having been press-ganged off the streets of Port Peril, the PCs wake up in the hold of the pirate ship *Wormwood* and are forced to join the crew of the despicable Captain Barnabas Harrigan. As they get used to life as pirates, the PCs soon make both enemies and friends among the ship's crew. Gradually, the PCs become the center of talk of mutiny—they might be unwilling crew members on the *Wormwood*, but they're pirates at heart, and want to control their own destinies rather than serving under Captain Harrigan.

As members of the *Wormwood's* crew, the PCs take part in an attack on a Rahadoumi merchant ship called the *Man's*

FIREARMS IN SKULL & SHACKLES

Although rules for firearms appear in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*, firearms are relatively rare on Golarion—they have been around for little more than 100 years, and are still uncommon outside of Alkenstar. As a result, firearms do not appear in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path until the final adventure, when the PCs face the Hurricane King, one of the few Shackles pirates to possess firearms.

For some, however, piracy and firearms go hand in hand, and a swashbuckling pirate Adventure Path would be incomplete without a trusty cutlass and pistol. Fortunately, it is relatively easy to add firearms to your campaign if you want to include them in your game.

Each adventure in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path will contain notes with suggestions on modifying the adventure to include firearms. In “The Wormwood Mutiny,” there are ample opportunities to not only include characters who use firearms, but also give the PCs access to those firearms. Perhaps the quartermaster's store (area A9) contains a few firearms that the PCs could steal, or maybe the booty on board the *Man's Promise* includes a brace of pistols that Captain Harrigan presents to Mr. Plugg, who would naturally use them against mutineers. It's also possible that firearms survived the wreck of the *Infernus* on Bonewrack Isle, and ended up in the castaway Arron Ivy's stockade (area C8) or were carried off to Riptide Cove (area D) by the grindylows on the island.

Promise, and are chosen as part of the skeleton crew placed on the captured ship. With a smaller crew, and the first mate Mr. Plugg in command, the opportunity to mutiny finally presents itself. Before the PCs can overthrow their pirate captors, however, a powerful storm arises and cripples the *Man's Promise*, grounding it on a small island at the edge of the Shackles, where the island's monstrous inhabitants attack the ship and kidnap some of the PCs' friends in the crew. As the rest of the crew repairs the ship, the PCs explore the island to gather needed supplies and find their missing friends.

When the PCs return to the ship, they and their allies can finally take on Mr. Plugg and those pirates loyal to him to seize control of the ship and finally become pirates in their own right.

PART ONE: THE WORMWOOD

The adventure begins as the PCs wake up in the hold of Captain Barnabas Harrigan's *Wormwood*. The campaign traits from the *Pathfinder Adventure Path Skull & Shackles Player's Guide* (available for free at paizo.com) provide



information about how each PC ended up on the *Wormwood*. If you're not using those traits, the PCs should each have a reason for being in Port Peril, and should be eager to embrace (or at least should not have strong opposition to) a life of piracy and adventure on the high seas. It is not necessary for the PCs to know each other—they'll have plenty of time to become acquainted during the coming weeks aboard the *Wormwood*. Whatever their reasons for being in Port Peril, each of the PCs spent the previous night drinking at the Formidably Maid, a notorious drinking establishment in Port Peril, where a press gang from the *Wormwood* marked them as targets. After drugging the PCs into unconsciousness, the press gang dumped them in the ship's hold to sleep it off, where the PCs soon get a rude awakening.

WELCOME TO THE SWEET TRADE

The PCs wake up the following morning in the dark hold of the *Wormwood* (area **A10**). They all remember the night before—the ringing laughter of a wild night, the heady joy of excess, the scents of rich stewed meat and perfume lingering in their nostrils. Then describe the sensations that the PCs feel—a pounding headache, the sickly taste of cheap wine in their mouths, the hard floor, a rhythmic creaking noise, and the feeling of the room swaying, as if they were still drunk. Before the PCs can do much more than sit up, however, several pairs of heavy footsteps enter the dark room, and the harsh light of a lantern painfully spears the PCs' eyes.

Creatures: Master Scourge, the *Wormwood*'s boatswain, master-at-arms, and infamous disciplinarian, has entered the hold to wake the PCs and get them up to the main deck. Six rough-looking *Wormwood* pirates, armed with saps, accompany him. An expression that might be mistaken for pain but which is clearly an attempt at a smile bruises Scourge's face as he cracks the whip in his hand and screams at the PCs.

“Still abed with the sun over the yardarm? On your feet, ye filthy swabs! Get up on deck and report for duty before Cap'n Harrigan flays your flesh into sausage skins and has Fishguts fry ye up for breakfast!”

The PCs quickly discover that most, if not all, of their weapons and equipment are gone (see below). If the PCs refuse, even momentarily, to accompany Scourge, he lashes out at any offending PCs with his whip. If necessary, he calls for aid from the pirates, who attack uncooperative characters with their saps. It should be immediately clear to the PCs that if they don't cooperate, they will quickly be overpowered. Scourge and the pirates herd the PCs up through the middle deck (area **A6**) and onto the *Wormwood*'s main deck (area **A3**) to meet the ship's captain.

As the PCs make their way to the main deck, they can begin to adjust to their surroundings and deduce what happened to them. A DC 10 Perception check discerns the aftertaste of oily nutmeg on the tongue. A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check or DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check recognizes this as a clear sign of oil of taggit poisoning (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 560). Each PC remembers indulging in either spicy food or spicy rum late last night, and those who made the above checks realize that the oil was likely added to their food or drink, and the spices hid the taste of the taggit oil. Any PCs who



Master Scourge

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

make a DC 10 Intelligence check remember seeing the face of Master Scourge last night as well, and can piece together the facts outlined above.

MASTER SCOURGE CR 3

XP 800

hp 32 (see page 21)

WORMWOOD PIRATES (6) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

Development: If the PCs decide to fight, Master Scourge and the pirates attack, attempting to disarm the PCs of any weapons they might have concealed and subdue them with nonlethal damage. The pirates will not kill the PCs, however. Once the pirates have the upper hand (with the help of additional crew, if necessary), they take the PCs—conscious or unconscious—to the main deck, where they get an immediate taste of punishment on the *Wormwood*. The PCs are tied to the mainmast, and Master Scourge gives each of them three lashes before the captain's address. See "The Life of a Pirate" on page 60 for details of punishments on a pirate ship.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The PCs begin this adventure with virtually none of their starting equipment. Captain Harrigan is no fool, and he is not about to let sailors who have been press-ganged against their will keep weapons and other gear they can use against him.

Allow the PCs to purchase starting equipment as normal before the campaign, but to make things easier, ask them to write down their equipment on a separate sheet from their character sheets—then take those sheets away at the start of the adventure. Bear in mind that without certain equipment, some characters—particularly alchemists and wizards—have next to no abilities beyond their skills and feats. Many pirates place little value on the written word, however, so these characters can quickly get their precious formula books and spellbooks back. See page 25 for details on how the PCs can recover their equipment. In addition, the PCs will soon find they have a friend aboard—Sandara Quinn, who has managed to acquire a few choice items of the PCs' gear for them (see page 17).

Although the *Wormwood's* press gang vigorously searched and robbed the PCs while they were unconscious, the pirates likely missed a few items. At your discretion, you can allow each PC to keep one item of equipment that could be easily concealed or overlooked—a holy symbol, a light weapon, a spell component pouch, or thieves' tools would all be good choices.

In addition, the following items are so common aboard the *Wormwood* that the PCs can easily access them at any time: barrels, baskets, blocks and tackle, candles, canvas, grappling hooks, hemp rope (any length up to 200 feet), lanterns, leather drinking vessels and waterskins, sacks, simple tools or hardware (especially carpentry tools such as hammers and nails), and any other simple items you deem appropriate.

ANIMAL COMPANIONS AND FAMILIARS

Waking up in the hold of a pirate ship can present another problem for certain PCs—namely, those who have animal companions or familiars. The best way to handle this potential complication is to discuss it with your players beforehand, and arrange for them to acquire their familiars or animal companions during play, aboard the *Wormwood*. A variety of animals already exist on the ship: the parrot Pluck in area A2, the livestock in the hold, rats, and even the bilge spiders in area A11. Aquatic or flying animals can easily be encountered swimming or flying along with the ship. Other animals can be part of the ship's cargo, held in cages in the ship's hold (area A6) and awaiting rescue at the hands of the PCs. Because they're roleplaying meeting their companions during play, PCs should not be required to spend any additional time or money to acquire these animals or familiars with this option.

Alternatively, if you or your players want to begin with animal companions and familiars before the adventure starts, it's easy enough to say that PCs' familiars followed their masters on board and are hiding in the various nooks and crannies of the ship until the PCs awaken. This is probably the best option for those PCs whose familiars are necessary for their class abilities, such as witches. With this option, the PCs' animal companions were captured along with the PCs, and are now held in cages in the middle hold (area A6), the quartermaster's store (area A9), or even in the galley (area A8), if they're of the edible variety. Freeing their companions or familiars from their captivity can be a fun side adventure for the PCs.

MEETING THE CAPTAIN

When the PCs reach the main deck, either of their own volition or under duress, it's quickly apparent that they are on a sizable ship in the middle of the ocean, far from any land. Port Peril and the mainland of the Shackles are just an ochre haze many miles astern. Figures cluster around the ship's mainmast, looking up at the higher deck on the stern, where two figures stand. One of them is a broad, muscular Garundi man with a shaven head, a long beard bound with gold rings, and an eye patch—clearly the captain. The other is a younger, balding



PIRATE GEAR

Many of the characters encountered in this adventure, and in subsequent volumes of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, are equipped with a variety of new pirate-themed weapons and equipment. In most cases, all of the information you need to run such characters is already included in their stat blocks. For your convenience, the weapon qualities for several new pirate weapons are presented in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*, but for full descriptions and statistics for the pirate gear referenced here, check out *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea*, available at fine gaming stores and at paizo.com.

man with a long black ponytail, wearing a long coat and carrying a well-used cat-o'-nine-tails.

At this point the PCs also notice that they are not the only new recruits—four others are standing with them on the deck, set apart by their relative cleanliness and their apparent unease with their newfound situation. A dozen or so other pirates, clearly existing members of the crew, stand about on the deck or in the ship's rigging.

Once the PCs are on deck, the captain addresses the crew.

"Glad you could join us at last! Welcome to the *Wormwood*! My thanks for 'volunteering' to join my crew. I'm Barnabas Harrigan. That's *Captain* Barnabas Harrigan to you, not that you'll ever need to address me. I have only one rule—don't speak to me. I like talk, but I don't like your talk. Follow that rule and we'll all get along fine.

"Oh, and one more thing. Even with you new recruits, we're still short-handed, and I aim to keep what crew I have. There'll be a keelhaul' for anyone caught killin' anyone. Mr. Plugg! If you'd be so kind as to make pirates out of these landlubbers, it'll save me having to put them in the sweatbox for a year and a day before I make pies out of 'em."

At the end of his speech, the captain walks away, leaving behind the man with the cat-o'-nine-tails. This is Mister Plugg, the *Wormwood's* first mate. He looks down at the PCs and other impressed captives and smiles unpleasantly. Plugg has no time for small talk or pleasantries. His intention is to get the new recruits working on the ship as soon as possible. He immediately begins his own unique and cunning evaluations to test the PCs' abilities. Mr. Plugg is introduced on page 20.

MR. PLUGG'S TESTS

After Harrigan's recent difficulties, the *Wormwood* is seriously undermanned, and Mr. Plugg has a number

of positions to fill on the ship. Whether or not the PCs are ideal candidates does not concern him in the slightest, as he assigns jobs first, then worries about making the PCs fit their roles afterward. Plugg is not remotely interested in who the PCs believe is best, or whether, for example, the best climber makes a couple of bad rolls and loses out to a lucky non-climber. The PCs can deliberately try to fail a test, however, by making a Bluff check opposed by Plugg's Sense Motive skill to get away with it. If the check fails, Plugg smells a rat and immediately gives that PC three lashes with the cat (see page 66) as punishment.

Plugg's first test is to see how good the PCs are at climbing, as he needs another sailor to work in the rigging. He instructs the PCs to climb to the crow's nest on the mainmast above the main deck as fast as they can, coldly cursing them if they hesitate, and cruelly taunting them if they fall. Climbing the rigging requires a DC 10 Climb check to reach the crow's nest, 60 feet above the deck. Remember that the PCs climb at one-quarter their normal speeds (or half speed with an accelerated climb) so each PC will need to make several Climb checks. The first PC to reach the crow's nest is the winner. In the event of a tie, the PC with the highest final Climb check is the winner. PCs who refuse the test are whipped by Scourge until they climb. The PC who wins this test is told that he or she is now a rigger, and works directly for Plugg, who assigns that PC the first day's duties at the conclusion of the second test.

Plugg's second test is one of necessity—he knows the ship's cook, Ambrose "Fishguts" Kroop, has a drinking problem, and he's fed up with eating rubbish. This test is simple: Plugg asks each PC in turn whether they can cook, and if one of them says yes, that PC becomes the new cook's mate. If Plugg gets to the end of the line without an affirmative answer, he simply picks the fattest PC (Plugg assumes that character likes food the most) and says, "You're a cook's mate now," and tells that PC to report to Ambrose Kroop in the galley (area A8). If more than one person claims to be a good cook, Plugg picks the fattest.

The remaining PCs are all assigned to be swabs, under the command of Master Scourge, who immediately gets them working. See *A Pirate's Day* on page 22 for details on the tasks associated with the PCs' new jobs. For the cook's mate, see page 21 for details on that PC's first meeting with Ambrose Kroop.

WELCOME ABOARD!

The PCs are about to spend a significant amount of time on their new home, the *Wormwood*. While there is much for the PCs to do and learn, there are characters and places aboard the ship that are far too dangerous for

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

low-level characters to deal with, and it's important for you to emphasize this. Aboard the *Wormwood*, tangling with the wrong person or triggering one of the ship's many traps can be deadly.

Some players might assume that low-level adventures are designed to allow them to interact with, and perhaps overpower, all foes they encounter, and might struggle with the concept of potentially fatal punishments, superior locks, and 16th-level adversaries in a 1st-level adventure. The adventure contains several broad hints about the relative strengths of various parts of the ship and crew within it, but take care that your players don't assume that Harrigan and his crew are there to be defeated. Many of these characters appear in "The Wormwood Mutiny" not as enemies to be killed, but to make the PCs' time aboard the *Wormwood* more memorable, and to instill in the PCs a healthy fear and loathing of Harrigan and his crew, several of whom will reappear later in the *Skull & Shackles* Adventure Path. As a result, if your players prefer more straightforward challenges, consider completely removing access to the more dangerous parts of the ship (through continual guards, magical locks, or beast guardians, for example).

Be sure to read through the following sections and familiarize yourself with the locations, characters, and activities aboard the *Wormwood*. The ship is not a static dungeon to be explored and cleared room by room; it is more of a "sandbox" that the PCs can wander through and scrounge for equipment, and in which they interact with the colorful NPCs aboard, both to gain allies and acquire enemies.

The *Wormwood* can be a dangerous place, and there are plenty of opportunities for the PCs to slip up and get in over their heads. Allow them to make mistakes and enjoy the experience, but be wary—if your players continually get beaten by Mr. Plugg or Master Scourge, they'll soon lose their tempers and simply try to kill the NPCs. Have friendly NPCs warn the PCs against taking such actions (for now) and counsel the PCs to bide their time. Revenge is a dish best served cold, and sooner or later the chance will come to serve it. The PCs may also have fun occasionally humiliating rival NPCs from a safe distance. A slippery floor, a bucket of bilgewater propped above a door, or a foul-tasting dinner are all good ways for the PCs to have their revenge without killing anyone.

Almost all of the lesser crew aboard this ship, with a few exceptions, are there for the PCs to interact with in any way they see fit. This adventure deliberately allows the PCs to take any approach they wish in dealing with the NPCs they meet, but be aware that the more enemies the PCs make while aboard the *Wormwood*, the tougher the final encounter of the adventure will be.

THE WORMWOOD

The *Wormwood* is a three-masted sailing ship, 100 feet long from stem to stern, and 30 feet wide amidships. Statistics for a sailing ship (as well as other common ship types) are detailed in the *Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*. The ship needs a minimum crew of 20, and presently has just in excess of that number (including the PCs). If the crew falls below 20 people for any reason, the work becomes harder, and the DC of all checks for work-related tasks (see page 23) increases by +2.

Unless otherwise indicated, interior walls on the ship are of wood, 2 inches thick (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 20). Doors are of good wooden construction (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18). Interior rooms are unlit during the day (except for those with windows or portholes), and usually have a single hooded lantern for light at night, providing either normal or dim light (open flames are dangerous on a ship at sea). Many doors and chests are trapped to keep them off-limits to swabs and common sailors (such as the PCs). The following traps may currently be found on the *Wormwood* (see individual encounter areas for the locations of these traps).

CROSSBOW TRAP

CR 6

XP 2,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden lock (DC 25 Perception, DC 30 Disable Device)

Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d10 plus purple worm poison/19–20)

HARPOON TRAP

CR 3

XP 800

Type mechanical; Perception DC 15; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual; **Bypass** hidden switch (DC 25 Perception)

Effect Atk +15 ranged (1d8+8 plus greenblood oil/x3)

SHOCKING GRASP TRAP

CR 3

XP 800

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (*alarm*); **Reset** none; **Bypass** hidden switch (DC 25 Perception)

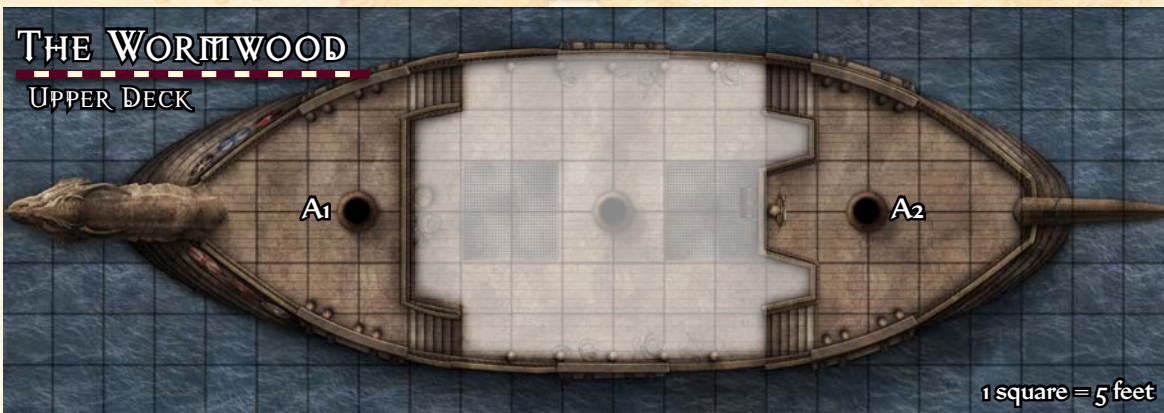
Effect spell effect (*shocking grasp*, Atk +6 melee touch, 5d6 electricity damage)

The *Wormwood* is crowded with pirates constantly moving about the ship, so it is not a static location, and any place on the ship can contain a variety of NPCs to interact with. The various cabins and compartments on the ship are therefore described below rather than being presented

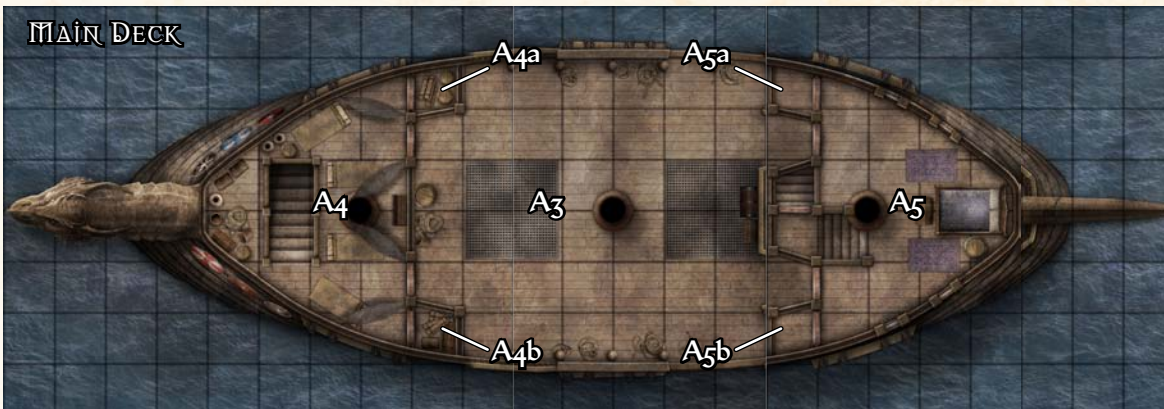


THE WORMWOOD

UPPER DECK



MAIN DECK



MIDDLE DECK



LOWER DECK



BILGES



GameMastery Map Pack: Ships Cabins

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

as individual encounter locations. Certain NPCs frequent certain areas (such as private cabins) on the ship, and these NPCs are mentioned in the descriptions that follow. Full information on all of the NPCs present aboard the *Wormwood* can be found beginning on page 16.

A1. Foredeck: This raised deck stands some 10 feet above the main deck (area **A3**), immediately behind the bowsprit, which is shaped like a rearing dragon. The foremast rises 30 feet above this deck.

A2. Poop Deck: This raised deck stands 15 feet above the main deck (area **A3**). The mizzenmast rises 30 feet above this deck. The ship's bridge protrudes forward of the mizzenmast, and holds the ship's wheel. The wheel is 3 feet across and has 10 spokes decorated with silver inlays, its bolts carved to resemble kraken heads. An iron cage hangs from the side of the mizzenmast, containing the body of Harmak Gruft, a pirate who beat the captain at dice. Gruft is dead, but his ugly parrot Pluck perches atop the cage, still waiting for its master to awaken. The aptly named Pluck, which has lost more than few of its feathers, could make a good pet or familiar if it can be lured down (such as with magic, a successful wild empathy check, or a DC 20 Handle Animal check). Pluck is considered unfriendly and possesses a considerable vocabulary of appalling curse words.

Captain Harrigan and Mr. Plugg spend most of their time on this deck. When the captain is on deck, the poop deck is off-limits to everyone but officers.

A3. Main Deck: The ship's main deck runs between the foredeck and poop deck. The mainmast rises from the center of the deck, extending 60 feet into the air and topped by a crow's nest. Rigging connects the mainmast to the ship's other masts and can be crossed with DC 10 Acrobatics or Climb checks. Several strands of thick rope are secured to the foot of the mainmast for use as a whipping post. An Escape Artist check (DC 20 + the binder's CMB) is required to escape the bonds. The ship's clock, a macabre brass-and-copper object depicting worms writhing through whale corpses, hangs from the mast above the whipping post. Not only does the clock keep time, but its bell strikes at dawn and dusk to signal the beginning and the end of the workday.

Two 10-foot-square hatches sit in the deck fore and aft of the mainmast. These hatches are thick wooden grilles (hardness 5, hp 30, DC 25 Strength check to lift) and open onto the middle hold (area **A6**) 15 feet below. At the fore of the ship, two doors lead into the officers' quarters (area **A4**), while two doors aft lead to the captain's quarters (area **A5**).

A large wooden box bound in iron sits just beneath the bridge. This sweatbox, used to torment sailors, has just enough room to hold one Medium creature (and can be altered to confine a Small creature). It is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30); Captain Harrigan and Mr. Plugg have the keys.

A small jolly boat (same statistics as a rowboat) sits on the deck next to the port rail. It has two sets of oars but no mast. Although designed to carry four Medium passengers, the jolly boat can fit six at a push.

A4. Officers' Quarters: The ship's officers occupy the hammocks and sleeping mats in this cramped cabin. A set of steps descends sharply into the middle hold (area **A6**) below. The two narrow doors leading to the main deck (area **A3**) are locked with good locks (Disable Device DC 30; all of the occupants have keys), and are trapped with harpoon traps (see page 11). The officers store their possessions in footlockers, each with an average lock (Disable Device DC 25). Roll on the Crew Lockers sidebar on page 14 for the contents of the officers' lockers.

Mr. Plugg, Master Scourge, Riaris Krine, Peppery Longfarthing, and Habbly Quarne sleep here at night, and at least one of them may often be found here at any given time during the day as well.

A4a. Armory: This tiny chamber is crammed with chests and neatly ordered weapon racks. The armory is secured with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30) and trapped with a harpoon trap (see page 11). The weapon racks hold 20 clubs, 12 heavy crossbows, 20 cutlasses (see *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea*), 50 javelins, 12 shortspears, and 20 grappling hooks each attached to 50 feet of rope. Two chests contain 500 heavy crossbow bolts each, while three other chests each hold 12 flasks of alchemist's fire. Four other chests each contain a breastplate, chain shirt, and buckler. The ship's master gunner, Riaris Krine, is meticulous in her job and quickly spots any obvious thefts, in which case an immediate search of the crew's lockers is made. Anyone found in possession of stolen items from the armory is given six lashes with the cat for a first offense, or is keelhauled (see page 67) for a second offense.

A4b. Peppery Longfarthing's Laboratory: The ship's sailing master and resident sorcerer, Peppery Longfarthing, uses this chamber as her laboratory. The cramped cabin is overwhelmed with curious and often unsettling objects that Longfarthing is studying. The door is secured with a good lock as well as an *arcane lock* spell (Disable Device DC 40; only Longfarthing has the key), and is trapped with a *shocking grasp* trap (see page 11).

A5. Captain's Cabin: Captain Harrigan's cabin is richly decorated, its walls covered with intricate carvings depicting krakens devouring whales. A quartet of portholes allow light to drift in, and a bed that can double as a navigational or dining table when the mattress is rolled up sits against the aft bulkhead with a chest at its feet. Two rich carpets flank the bed. A flight of steps leads down to the middle hold (area **A6**). The two doors leading to the main deck (area **A3**) are trapped with *shocking grasp* traps (see page 11), while the door on the stairs is trapped with a crossbow trap (see page 11). All of these doors have superior locks (Disable



CREW LOCKERS

Each pirate on the crew is assigned a locker with a poor lock (Disable Device DC 15) to hold their personal effects (though some characters have provided their own better locks). Each pirate's locker contains coinage (mostly silver) worth 1d20 gp (unless that character is currently gambling) and 1d3 objects from the following list. Pirates refer to this cache as their duffel.

d% Roll	Locker Item
01–05	An extra 2d10 gp
06–10	An extra 1d10 gp
11–15	Flask of acid
16–20	Flask of alchemist's fire
21–25	Flask of holy water
26–30	Tanglefoot bag
31–35	Thunderstone
36–40	Bedroll
41–45	Silver ring worth 5 gp
46–50	Gold earring worth 15 gp
51–55	Bullseye lantern
56–60	Thieves' tools
61–65	Masterwork tool
66–70	Common musical instrument
71–75	1d2 agates worth 10 gp each
76–80	1d2 hematites worth 10 gp each
81–82	Lucky rabbit's foot
83–84	Bicorn hat
85–86	1d6 days of trail rations
87–88	Bottle of brandy
89–90	Bottle of wine
91–92	Fancy peacock feather
93–94	Battered tankard
95–96	Brass knife
97–98	Sealed flask containing 1 dose of small centipede poison
99–00	Vial of antitoxin

Device DC 40; Harrigan has the only key). The portholes are very narrow, but a DC 30 Escape Artist check would allow a creature to squeeze through. The chest is locked (Disable Device DC 30) and contains Captain Harrigan's personal possessions, including a selection of nautical charts (which grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge [geography] checks made within the Shackles).

Captain Harrigan usually entertains his officers for dinner here, and sleeps here at night.

A5a. Cabin Girl's Quarters: The captain's cabin girl, "Caulky" Tarroon, sleeps on a small cot in the starboard compartment.

A5b. Captain's Storage: The captain stores his personal booty in the portside compartment, locked with a superior lock (Disable Device DC 40). Inside is a pair of iron chests, covered in a thin wood veneer. Both chests have superior locks (Disable Device DC 40) and poisoned dart traps (*Core Rulebook* 420), and they contain coins, jewels, and other treasures worth almost 10,000 gp in total.

A6. Middle Hold: This is the ship's main cargo hold. The hold is mostly empty at the start of the adventure, save for the 14 pigs; normally kept caged, they periodically escape and run loose within the hold. In the forward section, a flight of wooden stairs climbs up to the officers' quarters (area A4), while a second set of stairs descends into the lower hold (area A10). Owlbear Hartshorn is invariably chained to the foremast here to keep him from causing trouble and to keep people out of the officers' cabin. Another flight of stairs in the aft section next to the galley leads up to the captain's quarters (area A5), but it is common knowledge among the crew that the door is trapped. Stored near the mainmast are two light ballistas, a disassembled light catapult, and 12 barrels containing 20 gallons of oil each.

A7. Quartermaster and Cook's Cabin: This tiny cabin contains two beds and two footlockers. The *Wormwood's* quartermaster, Cut-Throat Grok, and ship's cook, Ambrose "Fishguts" Kroop, share this cabin with several of Kroop's chickens. Grok sleeps here at night, as does Kroop, who is found here during the day as well if he is insensibly drunk. See the sidebar on this page for the contents of the lockers here.

A8. Galley: The galley is the domain of Ambrose "Fishguts" Kroop, the drunken ship's cook. The cramped and chaotic kitchen holds two wooden worktables, several wooden cupboards, and two small stoves against the port wall, as well as virtually every cooking utensil imaginable and a frightening array of meat cleavers. A score of chickens and three goats wander freely throughout the chamber; the goats are meant to be caged, but have a distressing tendency to escape their bonds. The kitchen is a madness of dirt, food, and knives, and finding anything in here requires a Perception check. The stoves are perpetually lit, and large cauldrons bubble away atop them all times. A huge array of spices mingle with barrels of rainwater, two tuns of rum, cupboards full of ship's biscuit and salted beef, barrels of sauerkraut, and a small supply of fresh vegetables picked up in Port Peril. Despite the chaos, the entire galley functions as a set of masterwork tools for Profession (cook) checks.

Several items of value are lost among the ruin and squalor in the galley, each requiring a DC 10 Perception check to discover: a masterwork dagger being used as a butcher's knife, a pair of handaxes used as meat cleavers, 11 knives, a short sword, a vial of holy water, a good lock hanging unused off a pantry cupboard, 2 pounds of soap, four

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

waterskins, a barrel of poor wine, six bottles of good Chelish brandy worth 20 gp each, three bottles of magnificent rum worth 12 gp each, a large cookbook worth 125 gp (using the tome while cooking grants a +1 circumstance bonus on Profession [cook] checks), a prosthetic leg made of wood and edged with a silver band worth 45 gp, and 12 sp fallen behind a cupboard. In addition, a trio of harpoons (see *Pirates of the Inner Sea*), a spear, and Kroop's *steadfast grapple* (see page 59) hang on the walls.

A9. Quartermaster's Store: This cramped storeroom is detailed below.

A10. Lower Hold and Crew Berths: Sixteen pillars support the deck above this spacious hold. At night, the *Wormwood's* common pirates tie their hammocks between the walls and pillars and sleep until dawn. Two of Mr. Plugg's toadies, Kipper and Patch Patchsalt, have claimed the far forward section of the hold as their own, and their hammocks are strung between the foremast and the stairs leading up to the middle hold (area A6). A trap door just behind the mainmast opens onto the bilges below (area A11), and requires a DC 10 Strength check to lift. The hold is currently empty of cargo, but several footlockers line the walls. Each member of the crew has a locker, equivalent to a small chest. At the start of the adventure, only 18 of these lockers are in use (see the sidebar on page 14 for their contents), while 22 empty lockers are stacked along the walls.

A11. Bilges: This deck is detailed below.

A9. QUARTERMASTER'S STORE

The ship's quartermaster, Cut-Throat Grok, can usually be found in this cramped, crowded storeroom containing numerous barrels, boxes, and chests. The door is locked with a superior lock (Disable Device DC 40; Grok keeps the key), and features a 3-foot-square serving hatch (also with a superior lock).

The quartermaster's store acts as a kind of unofficial shop aboard the *Wormwood*. While any plunder stored there technically belongs to the captain, this is a pirate ship after all, and everything has its price. Any equipment stored within is for sale at the normal price listed in the *Core Rulebook*.

Items found on the ship (or won from other pirates) can also be traded at the store for other merchandise. Bartered objects are generally worth 50% of their normal value when traded for goods.

While the store is, in theory, open at all hours, it's usually only open from dawn to about 3 P.M., when Grok starts drinking. She only opens the door outside these hours to friends. Grok has a tendency to get drunk in the afternoons and closes the store before heading to the deck for the evening meal. After supper, Grok carries the crew's rum rations in a bucket to the main deck. She

often forgets to lock the door or the hatch at this time, an oversight that occurs 75% of the time.

Treasure: The quartermaster's store contains two tuns of rum (each holding about 105 gallons at the start of the journey) and six other containers. The contents of these lockers, along with information about their locks and any traps, are detailed below. Grok knows the value of the majority of the items in the store, but she is unaware of the value of those items marked with asterisks or thinks they are mundane, and sells or barter those items at their standard list prices.

At the start of the adventure, the PCs' starting equipment is held in one of the lockers, as described below. See Recovering Gear on page 25 for how the PCs may regain possession of their gear.

1. Wooden Locker (simple lock, Disable Device DC 20, no trap): Contains a random selection of mundane adventuring gear with a value of 10 gp or less.

2. Wooden Locker (simple lock, Disable Device DC 20, no trap): Contains the PCs' equipment, Rosie Cuswell's masterwork fiddle (see page 17), a starknife, 3 flasks of acid, 6 flasks of alchemist's fire, four sets of thieves tools (one of which is masterwork*), and a battered iron box containing six candles, one of which is a *candle of truth**.

3. Wooden Chest (broken lock, arrow trap [*Core Rulebook* 420]): Contains a *potion of barkskin*, a *potion of cure light wounds*, a *potion of haste*, a masterwork climber's kit, a disguise kit, 4 flasks of holy water, a magnifying glass, a set of manacles, and two tanglefoot bags.

4. Wooden Chest (average lock, Disable Device DC 25, arrow trap [*Core Rulebook* 420]): Contains a masterwork light crossbow, three cutlasses (see *Pirates of the Inner Sea*), 31 daggers, three masterwork daggers, 43 masterwork darts, four saps, a masterwork sap, 120 arrows, 20 masterwork arrows, six +1 arrows, and 200 crossbow bolts.

5. Wooden Trunk (good lock, Disable Device DC 30, no trap): Contains a suit of banded mail, a breastplate, two chain shirts, masterwork leather armor, three suits of studded leather armor, 12 bucklers, two masterwork bucklers, and a small cash box containing 231 cp, 99 sp, and 103 gp.

6. Metal Trunk (good lock, Disable Device DC 30, poisoned dart trap [*Core Rulebook* 420]): Contains a +1 *animal bane dagger** (Grok thinks this is just a normal +1 dagger), a +1 *short sword*, a masterwork warhammer, *scrolls of cure moderate wounds*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *scorching ray*, and *summon swarm*, and a *wand of bless weapon* (16 charges).

A11. BILGES (CR 1/4)

The lowest deck of the ship, the bilges are a foul, damp place with thick cobwebs above and 1–2 feet of dark, brackish water that stinks abominably below. A ladder leads up to a trap door that opens in the lower hold (area A10), and a single bilge pump rests near the stern. The bilges also double as the ship's brig, and six sets of



masterwork manacles with average locks (Break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30) are fixed to the bulkheads in the forward portion of the deck.

Creatures: At the start of the adventure, a pirate named Jakes Maggie is held here awaiting his punishment (see page 26). In addition, the cobwebs on the ceiling are home to countless large, hairy spiders known as bilge spiders, which occasionally drop on someone working in the bilges. For every day a character spends working in the bilges, there is a 25% chance that a single bilge spider drops down and attempts to bite. Once attacked, a spider flees back into the webs.

BILGE SPIDER

CR 1/4

XP 100

Variant scarlet spider (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 120)
hp 4 each

Treasure: A number of discarded crates and boxes packed with straw lie in the bilges, among which can be found a suit of leather armor, three heavy maces, and 12 sp. In addition, a DC 15 Perception check turns up the following in the dark waters (one item per successful check): a buckler, a masterwork handaxe, a vial of holy water, a tanglefoot bag, two tindertwigs, and 21 gp.

THE WORMWOOD'S CREW

The *Wormwood* is a busy place, and the PCs are in constant close proximity to their shipmates. In such close quarters, friends and enemies become very important—enemies might attack at any moment, but friends can help watch your back. In addition, the PCs' relationships with their shipmates become crucial at the end of the adventure when the PCs lead a mutiny against their oppressive masters. The players might not immediately realize that friendships are important, but a few of the events beginning on page 26 are designed to emphasize the importance of influence aboard the *Wormwood*. As the PCs make friends, friendly NPCs can further emphasize the importance of friendships.

At the start of the adventure, 18 pirates serve aboard the *Wormwood* (in addition to the ship's officers and the PCs). Like the PCs, most of them were impressed onto the crew, but some have been aboard several weeks now. These pirates come from diverse backgrounds and vary enormously, and have very different initial attitudes toward the PCs that reflect their personal histories. Some of these characters are just plain nasty and hostile (particularly those who toady up to Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge), while others are more friendly, but even the most hostile NPC can be befriended with luck or chance.

With the exception of most of the ship's officers, the PCs can interact with any of the crew NPCs during their time

on the *Wormwood*. Each NPC's initial attitude to the PCs is listed below, and the PCs can attempt to change an NPC's attitude using Bluff (to pretend to be friendly), Diplomacy (to be genuine), or Intimidate (to frighten an NPC into submission). These checks are treated as Diplomacy checks to change a character's starting attitude (regardless of the actual skill used), but they take time. Each check requires a ship action (see page 24), and a PC can only attempt one such check each day against a given NPC. There is no right or wrong way to approach these characters, but some NPCs have characteristics that influence their thinking, which can be discovered with a DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information or a DC 15 Sense Motive check. Changes in an NPC's attitude remain in place unless the PCs change it again through some action.

Friendly NPCs help out their shipmates during the day. A friendly NPC can provide a +2 bonus on any single job task skill check made by a PC (see page 24), provided the NPC has ranks in the appropriate skill. Helpful NPCs provide aid not only during the day as above, but also at night, providing a +2 bonus on checks to influence other NPCs, or on checks for pirate games and entertainments. Helpful NPCs are also happy to lend money or equipment (up to half their ready cash) or perform other actions at your discretion. If a PC abuses a helpful NPC in any way (such by attacking or cruelly duping the NPC), that character becomes hostile for the remainder of the adventure. Hostile or unfriendly NPCs tend to stick together with Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge in the evenings, where their talk is at the expense of the PCs and their friends. Be sure to keep track of the PCs' relationship with each NPC as this will become much more important later in the adventure, when talk turns to mutiny.

With so many NPCs in this adventure, be careful not to get overwhelmed by trying to track all of them. Let the PCs decide whom they interact with, and be sure to emphasize that Master Scourge and his cronies are also interacting with others at the same time.

The four NPCs below are, like the PCs, recent "recruits," and make natural allies (or perhaps rivals). Their jobs on the ship and initial attitudes to the PCs are presented before their stat blocks. The remaining crew listed in the Other Crew section have been with the *Wormwood* for varying lengths of time, though most came aboard fairly recently. Several of the NPC descriptions presented below include the contents of the NPCs' lockers in area A10. NPCs never lend their locker keys to anyone, including friendly PCs.

Story Award: Each time the PCs make an NPC helpful (other than Sandara Quinn), award them XP as if they had defeated that NPC in combat.

SANDARA QUINN

Sandara Quinn is a cleric of Besmara the Pirate Queen, goddess of piracy, sea monsters, and strife. Impressed on

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

the *Wormwood* like the PCs, Sandara takes an immediate liking to them, the result of a recent altercation with Master Scourge. She is a potential ally for the PCs from the very start—the only one aboard the *Wormwood* initially.

Before the start of the adventure, while the PCs were sleeping, Sandara visited Cut-Throat Grok and convinced the quartermaster to return her personal equipment, claiming the items were righteous artifacts blessed by Besmara that would bring a terrible curse on those who wrongfully held them. She also managed to acquire two items of use to the PCs. These items should be ones that two PCs would struggle to cope without, such as spellbooks or formula books, holy symbols, thieves' tools, or, if no PCs have such requirements, two light weapons.

If the PCs don't already know her, Sandara approaches them as soon as she can on their first day on the *Wormwood* to return their equipment and offer her friendship. She explains that on a pirate ship, it's not what you know but who you know that helps you get by. Friends help each other out, enemies cause trouble—on a crowded pirate ship, this fact is essential for basic survival. Sandara is detailed fully in the NPC appendix on page 56.

Job: swab

Initial Attitude: helpful

ROSIE CUSSWELL

Short but fierce, Rosie Cusswell has more muscles than most of the crew, and a fouler mouth than all of them put together. Rosie is from Port Peril, and like the PCs was impressed onto the *Wormwood's* crew. She has been on board 3 days and has already made her mark by threatening to chop off the hand of anyone who messes with her with her beloved handaxe. She has a healthy hatred of Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, who did not take her threats kindly. Rosie loathes the attention of Conchobhar Shortstone (see page 18), but secretly quite likes his style.

Like many halflings, Rosie loves food, drink, and tall tales; anyone who provides her with them gains a +2 bonus on all checks made to influence her. At the start of the adventure, Rosie is missing her fiddle, and has been unable to convince the quartermaster Cut-Throat Grok to give it back to her (having lost her temper when initially trying to do so). Any PC who can get Rosie's fiddle back becomes her firm friend, and her attitude to that character permanently changes to helpful.

Job: swab

Initial Attitude: indifferent

ROSIE CUSSWELL

CR 1

XP 400

Female halfling fighter 2

CN Small humanoid (halfling)

Init +6; Senses Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 17 (2d10+2)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; +3 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 25 feet

Melee mwk handaxe +7 (1d4+3/x3)

Ranged sling +5 (1d3+3)

TACTICS

During Combat Rosie likes to tumble through fights to gain the advantage. She is fearless and fierce in battle unless alone, in which case she fights from a position of strength and safety.

Morale Rosie withdraws from combat if reduced to fewer than 5 hit points. If cornered, she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 16

Feats Fleet, Improved Initiative, Power Attack





Skills Acrobatics +4, Climb +9, Intimidate +4, Perception +1, Perform (string) +1, Profession (sailor) +3, Stealth +6

Languages Common, Halfling

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*;

Other Gear leather armor, masterwork handaxe, sling with 20 bullets in a leather purse, 3-pint drinking stein with a silver lid depicting halflings riding dire badgers and slaughtering goblins (worth 25 gp), long red silk scarf, masterwork fiddle (currently stored in area Ag); **Locker** 2 flasks of acid, 2 flasks of alchemist's fire, tanglefoot bag, 30 feet of silk rope

CRIMSON "COG" COGWARD

Crimson Cogward (so called after the color his neck turns when he's angry) is a loner, and prone to incredible rages and dark moods. He wears a blue Varisian scarf tied tight around his shaven head to hide the scar left when his ear was bitten off in a bar fight. Cog gets pleasure from little other than combat and is quick to get into fistfights, whether because of a chance remark or simple bad luck. A devout follower of Pharasma, Cog prays regularly (particularly after combat) and participates in all Pharasmin religious festivals if possible. Cog actually volunteered to join the crew of the *Wormwood*. He has spent his first few days aboard stealing and secreting away goods for barter.

Cog loves dark tales. A PC who makes at least a DC 10 Perform (oratory) check focusing on dark tales gains a +2 bonus on checks to influence Cog for the next 24 hours. Similarly, fighters and other warriors (as well as more aggressive characters who favor muscle over talk) who intersperse their talk with grisly details of fights gain a +2 bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks with him. However, a failed check is likely to elicit a violent response from the angry sailor.

Job: swab

Initial Attitude: unfriendly

CRIMSON COGWARD

CR 1

XP 400

Male human ranger 1/rogue (thug) 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 19 (2 HD; 1d10+1d8+5)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** -1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee cutlass** +4 (1d6+3/18-20) or

dagger +4 (1d4+3/19-20 plus poison) or unarmed strike +4 (1d3+3)

Ranged composite shortbow +2 (1d6+3/x3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +2), sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat Cog fights like a cornered boar, caring little for his own safety.

Morale Cog does not fight to lose—he fights to win, or dies trying.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Intimidating Prowess

Skills Appraise +4, Climb +7, Disable Device +4, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +4, Profession (sailor) +4, Stealth +5, Swim +7

Languages Common

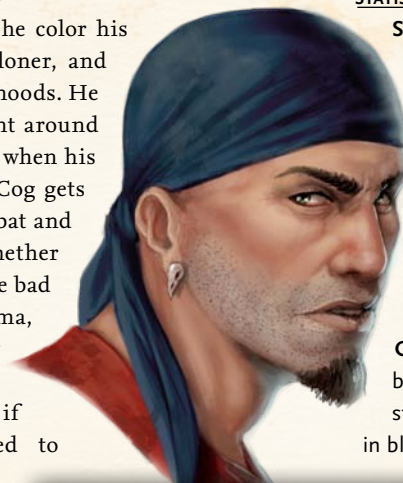
SQ frightening*, track +1, wild empathy +2

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, black adder venom (1 dose); **Other Gear** studded leather, cutlass**, dagger (coated in black adder venom) in a darkwood sheath, composite shortbow (+3 Str) with 31 arrows, long waxed coat with several pockets, thieves' tools, silver ring with symbol of Pharasma worth 75 gp, silk

Varisian scarf worth 15 gp; **Locker** (average lock, Disable Device DC 25) *potion of haste*, *potion of neutralize poison*, *scroll of scorching ray*, *wand of magic missiles* (18 charges), alchemist's fire (2 flasks), 2 bottles of wine, 2 small silver mirrors, tanglefoot bag, 39 gp, 132 sp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

** See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.



Crimson Cogward

CONCHOBHAR TURLACH SHORTSTONE

Conchobhar Shortstone is a handsome, honey-tongued gnome who wears a foppish purple hat, an eye patch, and a white silk shirt, and carries a dandyish cane. His appearance is that of someone pretending to be a pirate, rather than a true buccaneer. Conchobhar is a professional gambler who made the mistake of drinking with the *Wormwood's* crew one night and failed to notice the cosh in a crew member's hand until it was too late. He has been on ship less than 24 hours at the start of the adventure. Conchobhar is resigned to his fate but is determined to make the most of it, as he's always yearned for the sea anyway. One thing dominates Conchobhar's thinking—himself.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Conchobhar is also a serial womanizer, and female characters gain a +2 bonus on all checks to influence him. He finds Rosie Cusswell (see page 17) magnificent.

Job: rigger

Initial Attitude: unfriendly

CONCHOBHAR TURLACH SHORTSTONE CR 1

XP 400

Male gnome bard 2

N Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 14 (2d8+2)

Fort +0, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3;

+2 vs. illusions

Defensive Abilities defensive training

OFFENSE

Speed 20 feet

Melee sword cane* +2 (1d4)

Ranged shortbow +4 (1d4/x3)

Special Attacks bardic performance

9 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1), hatred

Gnome Spell-Like Abilities (CL

2nd; concentration +5)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals*

Bard Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +5)

1st (3/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *hideous laughter* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *flare* (DC 13), *know direction*, *light*, *summon instrument*

TACTICS

During Combat Conchobhar prefers to talk rather than fight. If he must fight, he lurks at the edge of combat, preferring to flank or attack with his bow.

Morale Conchobhar flees if reduced to 7 hit points or fewer, but he fights to the death for any female character he is on friendly or better terms with.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Martial Weapon Proficiency (sword cane*)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Appraise +5, Climb +5, Perception +7, Perform (sing) +8, Profession (gambler) +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan

SQ bardic knowledge +1, gnome magic, versatile performance (sing)

Combat Gear oil of animate rope, wand of mirror image (11 charges); **Other Gear** shortbow with 12 arrows in wood quiver, sword cane*, black silk gloves, bottle of musky perfume worth 35 gp, fake eye patch, foppish clothing, outrageously foppish purple hat, yellow silk handkerchief, key to locker hidden down left boot; **Locker** (average lock, Disable Device DC 25) *elixir of love*, 42 gp

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

OTHER CREW

The *Wormwood's* remaining crew members are listed below, along with their jobs on the ship and initial attitudes. The further down the list one goes, the more hostile toward the PCs the pirates are, and conversely, the friendlier they are with Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge. Even though many of these pirates are of different races, you can use the generic stat block below to represent all of these pirates for ease of play.

Barefoot Samms Toppin (CG female human): a former fisherwoman from the Soddan Lands who never wears shoes; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

Giffer Tibbs (NG female gnome): a bedraggled gnome with one eye; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

Jack Scrimshaw (N male human): a young lad talented at scrimshaw; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

"Ratline" Rattsberger (N male halfling): a rat-faced halfling with long arms and three missing fingers; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

Tilly Brackett (N female human): a tough joker who likes her rum; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** indifferent.

"Badger" Medlar (N female half-elf): an older woman who shaves her gray hair into stripes; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** unfriendly.

Shivikah (N female human): a very tall Mwangi ex-slaver; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** unfriendly.

Aretta Bansion (NE female human): a bad tempered ex-harlot with big ears; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** hostile.

Fipps Chumlett (NE male human): a fat, pushy bully with a shaved head; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** hostile.

Jaundiced Jape (CE male half-orc): a humorless, greedy half-orc mute; **job:** swab; **initial attitude:** hostile.

Maheem (LN male human): a big Rahadoumi with a permanent scowl; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** hostile.

Slippery Syl Lonegan (CE female human): an unhinged murderer who fled to sea to escape the gallows; **job:** rigger; **initial attitude:** hostile.



Conchobhar Shortstone



Tam “Narwhal” Tate (NE male dwarf): an old friend of Master Scourge with a large, ugly nose; *job*: rigger; *initial attitude*: hostile.

Jakes Magpie (N male human): a thief caught stealing from the quartermaster’s store and sentenced to keelhauling on the PCs’ first day (see page 26); *job*: swab; *initial attitude*: hostile.

WORMWOOD PIRATES (14) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Male or female warrior 2

Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 11 each (2d10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** –1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 feet

Melee cutlass* +3 (1d6+1/18–20) or

dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20) or

sap +3 (1d6+1 nonlethal)

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20) or

throwing axe +4 (1d6+1)

TACTICS

During Combat *Wormwood* pirates fight according to their loyalties. They always look out for themselves first, but aid those they are helpful to next.

Morale A *Wormwood* pirate withdraws from combat when reduced to 6 hit points or fewer, and flees when reduced to 3 hit points or fewer.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Athletic, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +4, Perception +1, Profession (sailor) +6, Stealth +3, Swim +7

Languages Common

Other Gear throwing axe, cutlass*, dagger, sap, basic pirate clothes*, personal effects such as cheap earrings, leather belt, lucky rabbit’s foot, hat with a parrot feather plume, etc.

* See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.

THE WORMWOOD’S OFFICERS

Captain Harrigan’s vicious temper and strict discipline ensures a regular turnover of fresh faces among his crew, and his officers are no exception. While the PCs should be able to befriend some members of the crew, the majority of the ship’s officers are too important and distant for the PCs to influence. In particular, Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge are the primary villains of the adventure, and both men automatically dislike the PCs. Of the remaining officers, only Ambrose Krook, Cut-Throat Grok, and Owlbear

Hartshorn can be influenced by the PCs, following the rules presented on page 16.

MR. PLUGG

Mr. Plugg is the *Wormwood*’s bullying and sadistic first mate. He is Captain Harrigan’s second-in-command, and his word is law on deck. He takes an immediate dislike to the PCs and any friends they make among the crew. Plugg is terrified of Captain Harrigan, however, and has more things on his mind than just the PCs. He’s suspicious of everyone on the crew, and while he grows to hate the PCs, he does not sully his hands with fighting them unless they attack him, in which case he fights with relish, calling on his allies for aid in dealing with the “mutineers.”

Plugg is a figure to be hated, though the PCs have little opportunity to get their revenge at first. By the end of the adventure, however, the PCs finally have the opportunity to give him (and his toady, Master Scourge) their just rewards. Mr. Plugg is detailed fully in the NPC appendix on page 54.

MASTER SCOURGE

Master Scourge is the *Wormwood*’s boatswain and master-at-arms, and Mr. Plugg’s right-hand man. As boatswain, he is in charge of all activities and sailors on deck, and as master-at-arms, he is responsible for discipline. Master Scourge is a sneering man with a braided beard and a mouth full of gold teeth. His body is tall and thin, and even his long coat and heavy boots fail to give any impression of strength or bulk. A sadistic coward, Scourge uses his association with Plugg as protection and in return has no morals when it comes to the tasks his master sets. He is bold and violent when the odds are stacked in his favor, happily kicking a dying dog in the street if asked to do so. But should that dog get up and bite, he quickly flees.

Master Scourge is a key villain in the early part of the adventure, and his whispered words further poison Mr. Plugg against the PCs. Scourge’s relationship with the PCs is a crucial one. He immediately senses something out of the ordinary about them, and his dreams of rank and fortune soon begin to unravel. Like most bullies, Scourge is a coward at heart, and sets out to discredit and ultimately kill his rivals.

This enmity is personal, and primarily directed at a single PC, though how this manifests is ultimately up to you. Scourge was recently rejected by Sandara Quinn (see page 56), and any object of her affections is sure to earn his jealousy and hatred. Likewise, Scourge might be jealous of a handsome and talented PC and fear for his own position on the ship. While Scourge focuses his hostility on one PC, he is also happy to intimidate and victimize the other PCs, as well as seeking to discredit the PCs’ friends. He avoids the PCs as a group, however, and immediately goes

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

to Plugg's side if threatened. If actually attacked, he also goes to Plugg, who may have the PCs disciplined.

Playing the bully requires you to temper the PCs' anger while ensuring they recognize Scourge as a deadly enemy with far too many allies to simply be killed. Terrified as he is of Harrigan and having no desire to be keelhauled, Scourge won't try to kill the PCs—at least, not at first. Instead, he seeks to poison the other crew members against the PCs, and is likely to succeed with his own small band of admirers, whom the PCs will find hard to convert. In essence, this group becomes a rival adventuring party, but with one crucial difference: these rivals also enjoy the support of Mr. Plugg. It's not until events move on to the *Man's Promise* in Part Two that Plugg and Scourge decide to have done with the PCs, but they'll eventually get their comeuppance at the hands of the PCs in Part Three.

MASTER SCOURGE CR 3

XP 800

Male human fighter 2/rogue 2
NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 32 (4 HD; 2d10+2d8+8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 feet

Melee whip +6 (1d3 nonlethal+2) or
mwk handaxe +7 (1d6+2/x3) or
punching dagger +6 (1d4+2/x3 plus black adder venom)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

During Combat Scourge prefers intimidating opponents to fighting them. Once in combat, he attempts to attack from behind, flanking with his allies.

Morale If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, Scourge flees and tries to make good his escape. A man who bears a grudge, Scourge is certain to try to slip dark reaver powder or oil of taggit into the meal or drink of anyone who humiliates or injures him when the chance comes.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +6, Climb +9, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +8, Profession (sailor) +8, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Languages Common

SQ rogue talents (bleeding attack +1), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *potion of blur*, *potion of cure light wounds*, black adder venom (on punching dagger); **Other Gear** leather armor, punching dagger, masterwork handaxe carved with notches for kills, shortbow with 12 arrows in leather quiver with a buttoned shutter to protect them from the elements, whip, boatswain's call, corked dark green bottle containing 8 doses of oil of taggit, six gold teeth worth 5 gp each, hefty waxed coat with many hidden pockets, leather snuff box with a diamond stud worth 100 gp containing 1 dose of dark reaver powder, silver wedding ring worth 25 gp, 14 pp, 29 gp

AMBROSE "FISHGUTS" KROOP

Ambrose Kroop is the ship's cook, nicknamed "Fishguts" by the crew, though whether this refers to the contents of his soups or the stains on his apron is unclear. His job is to bring the ship's biscuit on deck at dawn for the crew, and prepare and serve the evening meal. Kroop is a drunkard, but not constantly inebriated, and is a potential ally for the PCs. His unpredictability makes him a frustrating but ultimately useful friend. Like his friend Cut-Throat Grok, Kroop is from the school of hard knocks, but where Grok has become tough, Kroop has capitulated in the face of endless discipline and violence. However, as the adventure progresses and he becomes closer to the PCs, he becomes an increasingly useful ally. Kroop is detailed fully in the NPC appendix on page 52.

When the PC assigned as cook's mate first meets Kroop, be sure to emphasize the cook's sorry condition—he is drunk, but not insensibly so. He describes the job of the cook's mate, which basically entails helping him prepare meals, and actually acquiring food for meals by fishing on a fairly regular basis. At some stage during this initial discussion, Kroop makes the following point.

"It's poison, this ship, but don't let anyone hear you say it aloud. The hull listens, see, and the cap'n hears it all. Poison the *Wormwood* is, though, rotten to the core. You'll not meet a more nasty, sour piece of work than Cap'n Harrigan in all your days at sea, and his crew's the same, 'specially the first mate, Mr. Plugg. Vicious little sod, he is. He'd take his own mother's liver to the butcher to make pies with, he would. But they leave me alone, mostly. They know I can't 'arm 'em."

While Kroop is indifferent to the PCs at the beginning of the adventure, he is, at heart, a friendly salt, and soon becomes attached to any character who makes a modicum of effort as the cook's mate. In general, Kroop likes to cook and drink rum. He is usually insensibly drunk in his quarters during the evening, rarely venturing onto deck after serving the evening meal. Kroop's cook's mate gains a +2 bonus on all checks to influence the quartermaster Cut-Throat Grok. Kroop is also happy to



lend his mate any equipment from the galley, though stealing it without his permission is easy enough.

Initial Attitude: indifferent

CUT-THROAT GROK

Cut-Throat Grok (N female half-orc fighter 5) is the *Wormwood's* quartermaster, a no-nonsense character with a huge scar across her neck. Growing up among pirates is tough for anyone unusual, and Grok got her scar fighting a gang of cutthroats in the alleys of Port Peril who robbed her and left her for dead when she was only 11 years old. Grok is a reedy half-orc who favors dark clothing. She carries a notched greataxe and an array of throwing axes hangs from her belt. Grok frequently grins toothily, and uses appalling curse words, particularly when drunk. Grok is renowned for



Cut-Throat Grok

being tough, and she doesn't suffer fools, but she is a close friend of Ambrose Kroop, whom she sees as someone who's had even worse luck than she's had.

Grok is usually found in the quartermaster's store (area A9) during the day. In the evenings, she locks the store and carouses on deck, drinking and gambling with the other pirates before returning to her cabin (area A7) to sleep it off.

Grok loves unusual drink and fine songs, and a character who provides her with at least 20 gp worth of alcohol that isn't rum or who makes a successful DC 15 Perform (song) check gains a +4 bonus on all checks made to influence her. If Grok is made friendly, she allows the PCs into the quartermaster's store after normal hours, where PCs can negotiate for equipment with her with additional Diplomacy checks. Recovering a PC's starting equipment is considered simple aid (DC +0), a loan of goods worth up to 150 gp is considered lengthy aid (DC +5), and a loan of 300 gp worth of equipment is considered dangerous aid that could result in punishment, since she might get keelhauled herself for theft (DC +15).

Initial Attitude: indifferent

Story Award: Award the PCs 400 XP if they make Cut-Throat Grok helpful.

OTHER OFFICERS

In addition to the major NPCs detailed on these pages, a number of other officers serve aboard the *Wormwood*. Although most of these characters play little or no role in this adventure and cannot be influenced, the PCs may spot them aboard the ship or hear about them from their fellow pirates. Be aware that some of these NPCs do reappear later in the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, so you should try to avoid forming any strong relationships between these characters and the PCs at this point.

Barnabas Harrigan (NE male human fighter 5/rogue 11): captain of the *Wormwood*

Peppery Longfarthing (CN female human sorcerer 8): sailing master and old friend of the captain

Riaris Krine (NE female human fighter 7): master gunner
Habby Quarne, the "Stitchman" (N male human fighter 4/expert 3): ship's surgeon and carpenter

Kipper (CE male human rogue 6): gunner's mate and bootlicker for Plugg and Scourge

Patch Patchesalt (CE female gnome rogue 3/fighter 3): boatswain's mate and sycophant of Plugg and Scourge

"Caulky" Tarroon (CN female human commoner 3): the captain's cabin girl

Owlbear Hartshorn (N male human fighter 2): simpleton and "pet" of Mr. Plugg (see page 27)

A PIRATE'S DAY

The *Wormwood* works on discipline and routine. Captain Harrigan's philosophy is that a busy swab is a tired

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

swab, and tired swabs don't pick fights with each other. After breakfast, the crew work at their allotted jobs until dusk, when they gather on the main deck to witness punishments (the "Bloody Hour"), eat dinner, and receive their rum rations. After punishment time and the evening meal, the crew can do what they wish until dawn bell the next morning. See "The Life of a Pirate" on page 60 for more details on a pirate's daily life.

Each day, the PCs are assigned tasks to complete, based on their jobs (cook's mate, rigger, or swab). Roll 1d6 on the following tables to randomly determine the daily tasks for each PC who's a rigger or swab. See The Cook's Mate below for details on tasks assigned to the cook's mate. Each task represents a day's hard work and requires at least one successful skill check to complete. Failing a task's required skill check results in punishment. The punishment for failing a check by 4 or less is merely a severe verbal reprimand, or at worse, a rope bash (see page 66). Failing by 5 or more results in three lashes. The number of lashes increases to six if this is the second such failure in a row, to nine lashes for three failures in a row, and so on.

Work takes place under the watchful eyes of Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, and getting away from them is not easy. If a PC refuses to work or is unable to work, he or she receives a dozen lashes for the first such offense and a dozen lashes with the cat for the second. A third offense results in the character being put in the sweatbox (see page 66) for 12 hours.

Rigger Tasks

- 1 **Rigging Repair:** The ship's rigging frequently gets damaged and must be repaired, requiring DC 10 Climb checks to reach the rigging 30 feet up, followed by a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.
- 2 **Line Work:** Hard work hoisting and lowering sails, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 3 **Upper Rigging Work:** Work in the upper rigging, 50 feet up, requiring DC 10 Climb checks, followed by a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.
- 4 **Rope Work:** Handling the ship's ropes, including coiling them, stowing them, and securing them to cleats and single and double bollards, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.
- 5 **Lookout:** A climb to the crow's nest 60 feet up, requiring DC 10 Climb checks followed by a DC 10 Perception check.
- 6 **Mainsail Duties:** Tough work raising and lowering the mainsail, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Strength check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.

Swab Tasks

- 1 **Man the Bilges:** Vile and sweaty work cleaning out the bilges (area **A11**), requiring a DC 12 Strength check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 2 **Rat Catcher:** Catching rats and other vermin belowdecks, requiring either a DC 10 Stealth check, Survival check, or Dexterity check to catch and kill enough rats, cockroaches, and beetles for a good day's work.
- 3 **Swab the Decks:** Backbreaking work mopping the decks and scrubbing them with sandstone blocks called holystones, requiring a DC 10 Strength or Constitution check. Failing either check results in the PC being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 4 **Hauling Rope and Knot Work:** Tying and untying knots in the ship's ropes and moving heavy coils of rope from one part of the ship to another, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Strength check. The PC must also make a DC 10 Constitution check to avoid being fatigued at the end of the shift.
- 5 **Runner:** Passing messages to the crew and officers of the *Wormwood* in all parts of the ship except officers' cabins (areas **A4** and **A5**), requiring a DC 10 Acrobatics check and DC 10 Constitution check. Failing the Constitution check results in the PC being fatigued at the end of the shift. A PC with the Run feat automatically succeeds at this task.
- 6 **Repairs:** Things constantly tear or break aboard the ship and need repairs, whether sewing sails or splicing rope all day, requiring a DC 10 Profession (sailor) or Dexterity check.

THE COOK'S MATE

The PC who ends up as the cook's mate is in for an interesting life. The ship's cook, Ambrose Kroop, spends half of his time drunk. At the start of each day, there is a 50% chance that Kroop is insensible and no help during the whole day. Otherwise, he is merely drunk, but not helplessly so. If Kroop is insensible, Mr. Plugg supervises the cook's mate instead.

Each day, roll 1d6 on the table below to randomly determine the cook's mate's daily task. When Kroop is sober, he automatically makes the skill check for the day's cooking, with the PC's assistance. When the cook is drunk, the cook's mate must make the day's meal for the pirates by herself, in addition to her normal duties for the day. If the PC has to hunt or slaughter the food as well as cook, all checks for both tasks are made with a -4 penalty. In such cases, if the cook's mate takes any ship action (see page 24) during the day other than working, all work checks automatically fail (the cook's mate does not receive the +4 bonus for working diligently in this case; see page 25). On a failed check, the angry crew soundly berate the cook's



VOYAGE OF THE WORMWOOD

In preparation for his long-term plans (see the Adventure Background), Captain Harrigan wants to strengthen his position among the other Free Captains of the Shackles, but he first needs to increase his funds by plundering the shipping lanes. He tells only his closest allies (including Mr. Plugg) where they are heading, and tells no one why. After leaving Port Peril, Captain Harrigan takes the *Wormwood* north across Jeopardy Bay, then steers southwest, passing to the east of Dahak's Teeth on the fourth day and Motaku Isle on the seventh day. At this point, a storm strikes, driving the *Wormwood* southeast. Once the storm blows over, Harrigan tacks east, keeping his vessel well away from the Slithering Coast, sailing into the open Fever Sea for the remainder of the voyage, where Harrigan hopes to pick up merchant vessels from Bloodcove, the Mwangi Expanse, and Sargava. The *Wormwood* encounters the *Man's Promise* (see page 31) on the 20th day of its voyage and attacks within a few hours.

A DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) check enables the PCs to identify the countries and regions the *Wormwood* passes on its voyage, while a DC 20 check enables them to identify individual islands or settlements.

mate and administer several rope bashes to Kroop and his lazy mate. Regardless, food is still food, and the crew generally eat what they are given, no matter the results of the cooking checks (though they are still likely to complain loudly and frequently).

The captain's cabin girl, "Caulky" Tarroon, collects the officers' food from the galley each evening to take it to the captain's cabin. She tastes the food for poison before serving the other officers (you can't trust anyone on a pirate ship). Attempting to poison the officers is a horrendous crime, punishable by a triple keelhauling for the ship's cook and his mate.

Cook's Mate Tasks

- 1 or 2 **Cooking:** Assisting Ambrose Kroop in preparing the day's meal. If Kroop is sober, no check is required. If Kroop is drunk, this requires a DC 10 Profession (cook) or Intelligence check.
- 3 **Fishing:** Catching tonight's supper using the ship's nets. A DC 10 Profession (fisherman) or Survival check provides enough fish. A failed check results in a day in the bilges as punishment the following day (see the swab task Man the Bilges on page 23).
- 4 **Turtle Hunting:** Hunting leatherback sea turtles with harpoons, treble hooks, and nets. A DC 10

Profession (fisherman) or Survival check provides enough food. A failed check results in a day in the bilges as punishment the following day (see the swab task Man the Bilges on page 23).

- 5 **Bull Session:** Drinking with Ambrose Kroop and listening to his stories. The cook's mate must drink an additional rum ration, but is able to take an additional ship action during the day.
- 6 **Special Occasion:** Captain Harrigan is celebrating something today, and wants one of the ship's pigs butchered and cooked for dinner. The PC must make a DC 10 Profession (cook) or Survival check to slaughter the animal, then help Kroop to clean, cut, and prepare the carcass. If Kroop is sober, no additional check is required. If Kroop is drunk, this requires a DC 15 Profession (cook) or Intelligence check.

SHIP ACTIONS

In addition to their normal jobs on the ship, the PCs can also utilize their time during the day (and night) to explore the ship, scrounger for gear, interact with their shipmates, or attempt to influence NPCs.

With the PCs potentially scattered across the ship working at their jobs, however, there is a danger that early events in the adventure might focus too much upon the actions of individual characters. Some PCs might have more time on their hands and act accordingly. To avoid this, the PCs' activities aboard ship—carrying out their assigned tasks; exploring the ship; robbing, bullying, or befriending shipmates; working; or playing—are performed as part of ship actions. These actions reflect the time required to set up or complete an activity, such as gathering enough crew to play a game, scouting out a room to make sure it's empty, and so on. Remember that even the cook's mate has a job to do during the day, and ship actions are meant to reflect the available time a PC can carve out from his or her work time without going into too much detail.

Each PC can normally take two ship actions each day, one during the day and one at night. A PC can also attempt to take up to two additional ship actions during the middle watch in the dead of night (any nighttime ship action marked with an asterisk), but to do so the PC must make a successful Constitution check (DC 10, +4 per extra ship action taken) or be fatigued for the next day.

A list of possible ship actions is presented on the following page. As always, use your judgment as to when these actions are appropriate.

Story Award: Award a PC 100 XP for winning his or her first pirate entertainment aboard the *Wormwood*. The first time a PC succeeds in entertaining the crew, he or she should also receive an award of 100 XP.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Daytime Ship Actions

Work Diligently: Gain a +4 bonus on any one check for a job's daily task

Influence: Make normal checks for a job's daily task and attempt to influence a single NPC

Sneak: Make normal checks for a job's daily task and briefly explore one area of the ship (the PC can make a single Perception check or other skill check with no chance of detection)

Shop: Take a -2 penalty on all checks for a job's daily task and visit the quartermaster's store (area A9)

Shirk: Take a -2 penalty on all checks for a job's daily task and take time exploring one area of the ship. The PC can take 10 on a single Perception check or other skill check, but must make a check to avoid being discovered (see below).

Nighttime Ship Actions

Sleep: Go to bed early and sleep through the night (automatically recover from fatigue)

Gamble: Play or gamble on a game of chance or pirate entertainment (see page 67)

Entertain: Make one Perform check to entertain the crew (see page 67)

Influence*: Attempt to influence a single NPC

Sneak*: Take time exploring one area of the ship. The PC can take 20 on a single Perception check or other skill check, but must make a check to avoid being discovered (see below).

Steal*: Attempt to open a locked door or locker. The PC must make a check to avoid being discovered (see below).

THEFT, PILFERING, AND SECRECY ABOARD THE WORMWOOD

The *Wormwood* is a pirate ship, filled with dubious and murderous characters at best. Theft is common, but the key is not getting caught.

To perform any action unobserved, a PC must generally make an opposed skill check, such as a Sleight of Hand or Stealth check against an NPC's Perception check. On a crowded ship, however, it's not practical to make opposed checks against potentially dozens of NPCs. Instead, the PC should make an appropriate skill check (usually Sleight of Hand or Stealth) to represent a typical situation, using the following guidelines to set the DC of the check.

Attempting a stealthy action in a crowd, such as casting a spell with verbal or somatic components without being noticed: DC 20.

Attempting a stealthy action where there is a chance of discovery, such as visiting the quartermaster's store during work, exploring a room during the day, or attempting to open a chest in a room while its occupants are sleeping: DC 15.

Attempting a stealthy action under cover of a suitable diversion, such as attempting to open lockers when the rest of the crew are working or on deck enjoying themselves: DC 10.

Failing this check by 4 or less means the PC attempting the action is merely disturbed and is unable to complete the action. Failing the check by 5 or more means the PC is caught red-handed by a random crew member, and might be turned over to Master Scourge for discipline.

RECOVERING GEAR

One of the first challenges the PCs are likely to face is getting back their starting equipment, as well as adding to it. Everyone aboard the *Wormwood* knows that the quartermaster, Cut-Throat Grok, oversees equipment and booty, which is what the PCs' possessions currently are. Grok often sleeps and works in the quartermaster's store (area A9), an unofficial shop of sorts aboard the ship.

When the adventure begins, Sandara Quinn has managed to acquire a few of the PCs' items from Grok to return to them (see page 17). The rest of the PCs' equipment is held in one locker in area A9, as detailed in that area's description. Grok is used to dealing with impressed sailors' requests for the return of their personal equipment, and always tells such characters that their goods are now the captain's booty. However, Grok can be bluffed into believing that items are cursed or should otherwise be returned. On a successful Bluff check (opposed by Grok's Sense Motive check; she has a +1 skill modifier), Grok returns 10 gp worth of a PC's equipment for every point by which the PC's Bluff check exceeds her Sense Motive result. Grok is also incredibly superstitious, and anyone using superstition to bluff the quartermaster gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff checks against her. A PC cannot try to bluff Grok more than once in a 24-hour period.

The PCs are also free to purchase or barter for items from the quartermaster's store, as outlined in the description for area A9.

The PCs can also try theft, but stealing from the store is very risky. That said, Grok's memory has become progressively worse over the last few years, and she sometimes forgets to lock the store when leaving it, as described in area A9. If Grok is drinking with Kroop, the cook's mate might easily slip away for a few minutes to have a look around the store. Unless obvious evidence of theft is left behind (such as broken locks, triggered traps, or dead or unconscious characters), stealing from the store is likely to succeed, as long as the thief isn't too boastful or foolhardy. A PC who steals goods from the store and attempts to barter or sell them back to Grok discovers that the quartermaster is likely to recognize stolen goods for what they are, unless she is very drunk at the time. If Grok finds evidence of theft, a full search



WEATHER

The *Wormwood* encounters different types of weather as it progresses on its voyage, which can affect work on the ship, as detailed below.

Days 1 through 5: normal weather

Day 6: heavy rain

Day 7: building storm (–2 on all work checks for rigger)

Day 8: storm (see page 28)

Day 9: weakening storm (–2 on all work checks for rigger)

Days 10 and 11: normal weather

Days 12 and 13: heat wave (save DCs against fatigue increased by +2)

Days 14 through 21: normal weather

SEASICKNESS

Characters unaccustomed to life on board ships run the risk of getting seasick. Such characters must succeed at a DC 5 Fortitude save or become nauseated for the rest of the day. On the following day, the character is entitled to a new save. On a success, the character is sickened instead of nauseated. On a failure, the nauseated condition persists for another day. Each day thereafter, a character is entitled to another Fortitude save. Making two successful saves in a row allows the character to recover from seasickness for the duration of the voyage. The DC of seasickness increases to 15 in rough weather, and those who succeed at a check to stave off seasickness for a day must make an additional save if conditions change for the worse. Characters with 1 or more ranks in Profession (sailor) are never subject to seasickness.

of the ship and crew's lockers is launched, carried out by Mr. Plugg, Master Scourge, and six of their most loyal pirates. If stolen goods are found, the penalty is usually keelhauling, even if such booty is planted.

Story Award: Award 200 XP to each PC who manages to recover all of his or her equipment.

DAY 1: A KEELHAULING FOR JAKES MAGPIE

The PCs' first day aboard the *Wormwood* sets the pattern for the succeeding days, as they get used to the routine of the ship and her crew. In general, days always follow the following format of work, leisure, and rest, unless other events take precedence as detailed below.

Arrival: The PCs wake up in the hold of the *Wormwood*. Master Scourge and his mates lead them on deck, where Captain Harrigan welcomes the PCs aboard and Mr. Plugg assigns the PCs jobs on the ship.

Work: The PCs spend the day at their assigned jobs. In addition, each PC can take a single daytime ship action.

“Bloody Hour”: The crew gathers on deck at dusk to witness the keelhauling of Jakes Magpie, a pirate caught stealing from the quartermaster's store the night before. After a brief interrogation at the hands of Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, Jakes admitted his crime, and is now brought up from the bilges (area **A11**) to be slowly keelhauled before the evening meal. A DC 15 Perception check notices the relish with which Mr. Plugg, in particular, tugs at the rope as the unfortunate Magpie is dragged under the ship for 12 rounds. What appears on the other side has been cut to shreds and is soon thrown overboard to feed the sharks. A PC who examines the body before it is dumped can make a DC 15 Heal check to estimate that the unfortunate Jakes took about 24 points of damage from the punishment and drowned as well. Witnessing Jakes's keelhauling should help impress upon the players the deadly nature of pirate punishments.

Leisure: After dinner and the rum rations, various pirate entertainments (see page 67) take place on deck or below, for as long as people are sober enough to participate. In addition, each PC can take a single nighttime ship action.

Rest: Provided they've drunk their rum rations, the PCs can retire to their hammocks in the lower hold (area **A10**) whenever they wish. The PCs can take additional nighttime ship actions if they have the energy.

Story Award: Award 100 XP to each PC who successfully completes his or her first day's work.

DAY 2: LAYING DOWN THE LAW (CR 3)

This encounter occurs at dawn on the PCs' second day aboard the *Wormwood* in the crew berths (area **A10**).

Creatures: Mere seconds after the bell tolls to summon the crew on deck, four pirates—Aretta Bansion, Fipps Chumlett, Jaundiced Jape, and Slippery Sy Lonegan—block the PCs' path. “In a hurry?” one says, and laughs, pushing a random PC in the chest. Master Scourge has already talked to the four, telling them he doesn't like these new swabs (the PCs), and that the sluggards need to be knocked into shape. Scourge has instructed the pirates to give the PCs a bit of a beating and prevent them from getting on deck in time for their shift. The pirates want a fistfight, not a knife fight, and approach the PCs without weapons drawn. Meanwhile, a handful of other sailors loiter on the stairs to watch the fight.

WORMWOOD PIRATES (4)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

Melee unarmed strike +3 (1d3+1 nonlethal)

TACTICS

Morale The pirates fight for 8 rounds, then run on deck. If the PCs draw weapons, all of the pirates back away except

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Fipps Chumlett, who draws a dagger. If faced by two armed characters, however, he backs down. In this event, Fipps can no longer be influenced by the PCs and remains hostile for the remainder of the adventure.

Development: If any character is killed, Mr. Plugg launches an investigation, and keelhauls the murderer. Any characters who arrive late on deck (whether PCs or NPCs) are sentenced to three lashes for laziness. Mr. Plugg adds three more lashes if they are impertinent.

DAY 4: SOMETHING IN THE BILGES (CR 3)

The PCs should not be assigned duty in the bilges today. If such work is indicated, roll again to find new tasks for the PCs.

At about mid-morning on the fourth day, young Jack Scrimshaw rushes onto deck. Any PCs on deck can make a DC 10 Perception check to notice his ashen face as well as overhear what he reports to Mr. Plugg. Jack was below on rat-catching duty when something big swam out of the bilge water and bit him. Plugg immediately looks for volunteers to investigate, and selects all of the PCs (including the cook's mate), telling them to get down to the bilges (area A11) and not bother coming out until whatever is down there is dead.

Creatures: Six dire rats have gnawed their way out of a dodgy consignment of barley the captain picked up in Port Peril on the cheap, and have taken up residence in the brackish water in the bilges. Today the weather is so blistering that the bilges are considered very hot (*Core Rulebook* 444). The water provides the rats with concealment against the PCs.

DIRE RATS (6)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 232)

Development: After they have dealt with the rats, the PCs have the chance to explore and ransack the bilges for gear (see area A11). If the PCs spend more than 4 hours in the bilges, Mr. Plugg sends one of the pirates down to tell them if they can't deal with one tiny creature in half an hour, they each get three lashes. If the PCs fail to kill all of the rats, they're likely to bite someone else, an event that earns the PCs three lashes each. In that case, the following day Mr. Plugg automatically assigns only one PC (to prevent time wasting) to the bilges again.

DAY 5: THE OWLBEAR (CR 1)

This encounter occurs during the fifth evening of the voyage.

Creature: Mr. Plugg's "pet," a simpleminded, hulking brute called Owlbear Hartshorn, is usually kept belowdecks in the middle hold (area A6), but Plugg brings him out on special occasions, such as when he wants someone killed

or taught a lesson. Plugg and his cronies lead Owlbear onto deck just after the evening meal "for a bit of sport" and dare one of the PCs to take him on—bare-knuckle fists or wrestling only, no magic tricks, and the last one conscious wins. To make it interesting, Plugg tosses down a purse of 100 gp as a wager on Owlbear. The PCs can choose which of their own will fight Owlbear, and can bet on their chosen champion—the winner takes the entire pot.

Owlbear Hartshorn is a large man with meaty fists. He's a bit simple, and the rest of the crew enjoys having a laugh at the poor fellow's expense. To try to make friends, Hartshorn has taken to clowning, laughing, and crying out random phrases at the top of his voice, as this seems to make people laugh. Owlbear likes to eat live crabs, breaking the shells with his teeth and fingers, and his



Owlbear Hartshorn



shaved skin still shows signs of the tarring and feathering the crew gave him as a cruel joke not so long ago.

OWLBEAR HARTSHORN

CR 1

XP 400

Male human fighter 2

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** Perception -2

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-1 Dex)

hp 24 (2d10+9)

Fort +5, **Ref** -1, **Will** -2; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

Weaknesses blind in one eye

OFFENSE

Speed 30 feet

Melee unarmed strike +5 (1d3+3 nonlethal) or club +5 (1d6+3)

Ranged barrel +1 (1d6+3) or club +1 (1d6+3)

TACTICS

During Combat Owlbear fights with his fists, dealing nonlethal damage until reduced to 15 hit points or fewer (see *Morale* below). If grappled, he attempts to break the grapple, but goes to back to using his fists as soon as he is free.

Morale If Owlbear is reduced to 15 hit points, Plugg hurls a club in his direction. Owlbear naturally picks up the club and continues the fight with the weapon. If reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, Owlbear cries and tries to back away, but is pushed back into combat by Plugg and his mates.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 4, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 14

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Intimidating Prowess, Throw Anything, Toughness

Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +8

Languages Common

Other Gear handful of live crabs

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blind in One Eye (Ex) A character who makes a DC 10

Perception or Sense Motive check notices that Owlbear is blind in his left eye and very slow. If his opponent notices this and attempts to fight Owlbear from that side, that PC can make a DC 10 Acrobatics or Bluff check each round to easily avoid Owlbear's clumsy blows.

Development: If the PC defeats Owlbear, that character gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all future checks (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Perform) to influence the NPCs on the ship for the remainder of the adventure. This circumstance bonus stacks with other bonuses. If the PC backs away when Owlbear does, he gains an even more valuable boon—Owlbear's friendship. The

towering hulk is not used to being treated with respect and kindness, and becomes helpful in attitude to that PC for the rest of the adventure. Although Owlbear is kept belowdecks most of the time, he can be a useful ally when the PCs mutiny at the end of the adventure.

Mr. Plugg keeps a close eye on the PCs, and if anyone attempts to fix the fight with magic, or if the PC fighting Owlbear draws a weapon, the offending character is given six lashes for the transgression. If the PCs kills Owlbear, the punishment is a dozen lashes with the cat.

Story Award: If Owlbear is defeated (or the PCs gain his friendship), award the PCs his full XP value.

DAY 8: THE STORM (CR 2)

After a day of heavy winds and rain, a storm well and truly hits the *Wormwood* on the eighth day. The ship is tossed about on the high seas and all hands are called on deck to work, including the cook's mate. All of the crew is required in the rigging, and the PCs are assigned random tasks from the rigger task list. The DC of all such tasks is increased by +2. The crew must stay up all night battling the storm—there is no evening rest or entertainment, and after the evening meal (ship's biscuit only, on this occasion), assign the PCs new tasks from the rigger task list. The PCs must make DC 14 Constitution checks to avoid becoming fatigued at the end of their second shift; PCs who are already fatigued and fail this check become exhausted and drop to sleep at work, an act that earns them each six lashes the following day as punishment.

At some point during the storm, a friendly NPC (your choice, but not Ambrose Kroop or Sandara Quinn) goes overboard. Swimming in stormy waters requires a DC 20 Swim check. The NPC must make two consecutive DC 20 Swim checks within 12 checks or the *Wormwood* vanishes from sight and the character is lost at sea. The PCs can try to rescue the overboard NPC by tossing rope to them. To get the rope close enough, a PC must make a ranged touch attack against the character in the water (range increment 10 feet). On the first round, the NPC is 10 feet away. Each succeeding round, the NPC drifts 1d3x10 feet farther away from the ship. If the attack misses, the rope lands too far away to help and must be drawn back and thrown again or a new rope must be thrown (use the rules for splash weapons [Core Rulebook 202] to see where the rope lands). If the attack hits, the NPC in the water gains a bonus on his Swim checks equal to twice the total Strength modifiers of those hauling the rope. Up to three characters can add their Strength modifiers to help in this way. If the NPC fails the Swim check by 5 or more, he loses his grip on the rope and it must be drawn back and thrown again or a new rope must be thrown.

When the night shift ends, the next day's work begins, and new tasks are assigned using the normal task tables.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

The PCs must make DC 18 Constitution checks to avoid becoming fatigued or exhausted as detailed above.

Story Award: Award the PCs 600 XP for surviving the storm. If they rescue the NPC who falls overboard, award them XP as if they had defeated that NPC in combat.

DAY 11: TROUBLE IN THE SUN (CR 3)

Approaching the Slithering Coast, the waters become shallow and navigation is tricky. As the afternoon wears on, Mr. Plugg calls the PCs together on the main deck. At his feet lie four crab pots. Plugg informs the PCs that the captain wants fresh crab for supper. Plugg points to a reef lying some 200 feet north of the ship and instructs the PCs and one of the NPCs friendly to them to swim to the reef, fill the pots with crabs, and swim back. Plugg brooks no further discussion.

The waters are calm (DC 10 Swim checks) and clear (visibility 100 feet). The initial swim across the open water passes without event, and the PCs soon approach a superb coral reef, measuring approximately 100 yards square, lying between 5 and 30 feet below the surface. Many crabs inhabit the reef, and each round, each PC can make a DC 10 Perception or Survival check to spot a crab, followed by a DC 10 Swim check to swim down and catch that crab. Four crabs are required to fill a pot.

Creatures: Two reefclaws lair in the reef. They swim out from the cover of the coral to attack 1d4 rounds after the PCs arrive at the reef, eager to get a rare taste of human flesh.

REEFLAWS (2) **CR 1**

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 234)

TACTICS

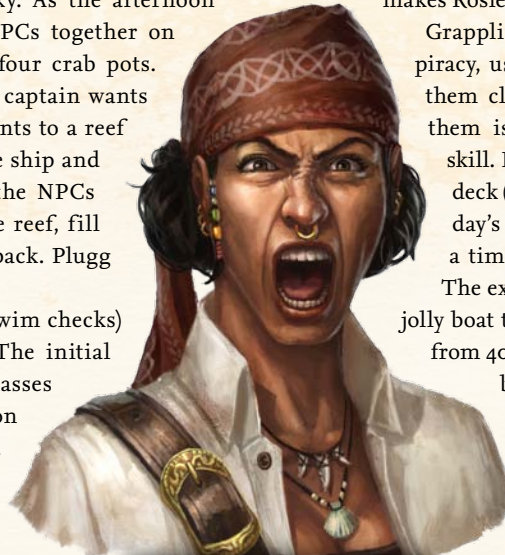
Morale The reefclaws are tenacious in combat and fight to the death, wanting to feast upon these tasty new morsels.

Treasure: Reefclaws make very good eating, and a single reefclaw fills a crab pot. If the PCs bring back any reefclaws for the captain's supper, the captain rewards them by returning all of one PC's equipment. If the chosen PC has already reclaimed his or her equipment, the captain rewards the PCs with a *potion of cure moderate wounds* instead.

DAY 14: BOARDING SCHOOL

The PCs are excused from their regular work today, as they are to be trained in boarding. This training is carried out

under the watchful eye of **Riaris Krine** (NE female human fighter 7), the *Wormwood's* master gunner. Krine's skin is darkened from countless days on deck under the sun, and her nose has the appearance of having been broken several times over. One of her legs has been replaced with a wooden peg leg, the result of a wayward catapult shot that took off her leg below the knee. She may be the most vile-tongued wench the PCs have ever met, and her language makes Rosie Cusswell sound like a nun.



Riaris Krine

Grappling hooks are an essential part of piracy, used to grapple enemy ships and draw them closer for boarding. Being able to use them is therefore considered a vital pirate skill. Krine orders the jolly boat on the main deck (area **A3**) to be launched at dawn for the day's work. She takes two characters out at a time to instruct them in using grapples.

The exercise consists of the characters in the jolly boat throwing grapples onto the *Wormwood* from 40 feet away, tying the rope off, and then boarding the *Wormwood* by climbing along the rope. To make it interesting, however, Krine has instructed four random crew members to hurl objects at the boarding characters in an attempt to knock them off, simulating a real attack.

Throwing a grappling hook (*Core Rulebook* 155) requires a ranged attack roll, treating the hook as a thrown weapon with a range increment of 10 feet. The *Wormwood's* rail is AC 5. At 40 feet away, the PCs have a -6 on their attack rolls. Once the hook is set, the PC must tie off the rope as a move action, then shimmy along the rope, requiring DC 15 Climb checks. As they climb, the four pirates aboard the *Wormwood* hurl a variety of rotting food, garbage, empty bottles, and buckets of bilgewater at the PCs. These items (which count as improvised weapons) do no damage, but any character struck must make a DC 10 Reflex save or lose his grip and fall into the water.

Krine is determined to make the characters learn this exercise. If any character fails to reach the *Wormwood*, she makes that character do it again, but this time alone, with the four pirates on the ship throwing things solely at that character. After three attempts, regardless of the results, Krine is satisfied that the character knows what to do.

Development: Any character who is knocked off the rope three times is given six rope bashes after the exercise. Make a note of the PC who performs best in this task. In a few days, that PC will lead the other PCs onto the *Man's Promise* as part of the boarding party in Part Two.

Story Award: Award each PC who successfully completes the boarding exercise 100 XP.



DAY 17: UNPLEASANT DUTIES

At this stage of the journey, the PCs and their allies and Scourge and his followers have become more polarized. Decrease the attitude of any NPC not on at least friendly terms with any PC by one level. NPCs who are already hostile to the PCs can no longer be influenced by the PCs. Scourge has also wholly convinced Mr. Plugg that the PCs are trouble, no matter what they have done.

Mr. Plugg begins making more appearances at this point, taking a personal interest in the PCs, soundly abusing them, carefully noting each mistake for punishment, and generally bullying and trying to humiliate them.

With the exception of the cook's mate, you should no longer roll for random tasks each day. From now on, Mr. Plugg assigns the PCs the worst duties or the duty they most hate every day.

DAY 19: RISKY GAMES IN THE BILGES (CR 2)

The PC whom Scourge hates the most (or a random PC, if no one particularly stands out) is assigned to the bilges (area A11) to help pump them out. The other PCs are assigned tasks as normal, though no others are assigned to

the bilges. On the way to the bilges, the PC bumps into Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge, who search the PC for hidden weapons and forcibly remove any the PC might have.

Creatures: Three characters man the pumps—the PC and two hostile *Wormwood* pirates. Each pirate carries a hidden dagger. The PC can make a DC 12 Perception check to spot the hidden weapons. After a few minutes, one of the pirates accuses the PC of slacking. The other pirate quickly joins in and attacks the PC, intending to kill the PC away from prying eyes and make it look like an accident.

WORMWOOD PIRATES (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

Development: Keelhauling is the normal penalty for killing a member of the crew, but if they kill the PC, the pirates topple several barrels over the PC's body, claiming the death was a terrible accident. If the PC kills the pirates and the deaths are discovered, the PC is locked in the sweatbox to await keelhauling on the following day. Fortunately for that PC, the *Wormwood* encounters another

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

ship before the punishment can be carried out, and the PC is released to join the boarding party (see Part Two).

DAY 20: SAILS ON THE HORIZON

A lookout cries “Ship ahoy!” late in the afternoon, and Captain Harrigan immediately turns the *Wormwood* to pursue its prey. As the evening wears on, the *Wormwood* gradually gains on the other ship, and by dawn, less than half a mile separates the two.

DAY 21: PIRACY!

The *Wormwood* closes on the ship sighted the previous day. Proceed to Part Two.

PART TWO: THE MAN’S PROMISE

The PCs are about to get a taste of real piracy as the *Wormwood* closes in upon a Rahadoumi merchant vessel called the *Man’s Promise*. As soon as she spots the *Wormwood*, the merchant ship flees, but her sails are no match for those of the pirate ship, which closes over a period of 12 hours. During the last hour, Captain Harrigan instructs Kroop and the PC cook’s mate to slaughter half a dozen pigs, slit their throats, and throw them overboard to attract sharks to the scene of the battle.

The *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide* has rules for ship-to-ship combat, which will be utilized in future volumes of the *Skull & Shackles Adventure Path*. As lowly swabs, however, the PCs have little influence upon this battle until the two ships are close enough for boarding. As a result, the ship-to-ship combat rules are not used for this battle. The *Wormwood* automatically closes with the *Man’s Promise* and grapples it, allowing the *Wormwood’s* crew to board the Rahadoumi vessel. If you wish to play out the ship-to-ship combat using the rules in the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide*, you may do so, but bear in mind that the safe capture of the *Man’s Promise* is an integral part of this adventure.

The battle between the *Wormwood* and the *Man’s Promise* is presented as a series of events, with the two ships closing, followed by grappling and boarding actions, and finally the fight between the two crews on the ships’ decks. Once shipboard combat begins, the focus of the battle shifts to the PCs, with events transpiring round by round, as detailed below.

BATTLE APPROACHES

As the *Wormwood* closes to within half a mile of the *Man’s Promise*, Riaris Krine summons the PCs to the *Wormwood’s* poop deck (area A2) to give them their task for the upcoming battle. The PCs’ orders are as follows.

“The ship’s wheel is on the aft deck, just below the sterncastle. You’re going to grapple over, kill the guards on the sterncastle,

take the wheel, and guard the ship’s boats. Kill anyone who tries to get away on one of the boats. Don’t move from the wheel until the fighting’s done, or you’ll have to answer to me. Oh yeah, as we get close, it’s going to get foggy. Just stick to what I told you to do.”

Krine puts the PC who performed best in the boarding training (see page 29) in charge of the boarding party, and issues any PC who still has not acquired a weapon a single weapon (excluding alchemist’s fire) from the armory (area A4a). The PCs can make a DC 15 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince Krine of the importance of their mission and choose two NPC pirates to accompany them, but characters such as Grok, Kroop, and Owlbear are all busy elsewhere. The PCs can choose two hostile or unfriendly NPCs if they wish—people do die in battle after all.

CLOSING FOR BOARDING

The two ships soon enter into reasonable firing range (120 feet) and close together at a speed of 30 feet per round. The crew of the *Man’s Promise* begins to bombard the *Wormwood* with missiles, mainly crossbow bolts, but also with two ballistas on the sterncastle attacking the *Wormwood’s* rigging in a futile attempt to slow the pirate ship. At the same time, banks of heavy mist suddenly envelop the enemy ship. From now until the conclusion of the battle, combat aboard the *Man Promise* takes place within multiple *fog cloud* spells cast by Peppery Longfarting (CL 8th).

As crossbow fire is exchanged between the two ships, the PCs are free to act against the rapidly approaching ship. Their closest targets are the Rahadoumi sailors on the sterncastle of the *Man’s Promise* (see Round 1 below). Sailors on a ship (including the PCs) have partial cover (+2 to AC and +1 on Reflex saving throws) while those in the sterncastle have cover (+4 to AC and +2 on Reflex saving throws), as well as total concealment (50% miss chance) from the *fog cloud*.

If the PCs fire or cast spells at the other ship, they have a chance of being targeted themselves. Each round, there is a 40% chance that the PCs are attacked by 1d4 heavy crossbows from the *Man’s Promise* (Atk +1 ranged, 1d10/19–20).

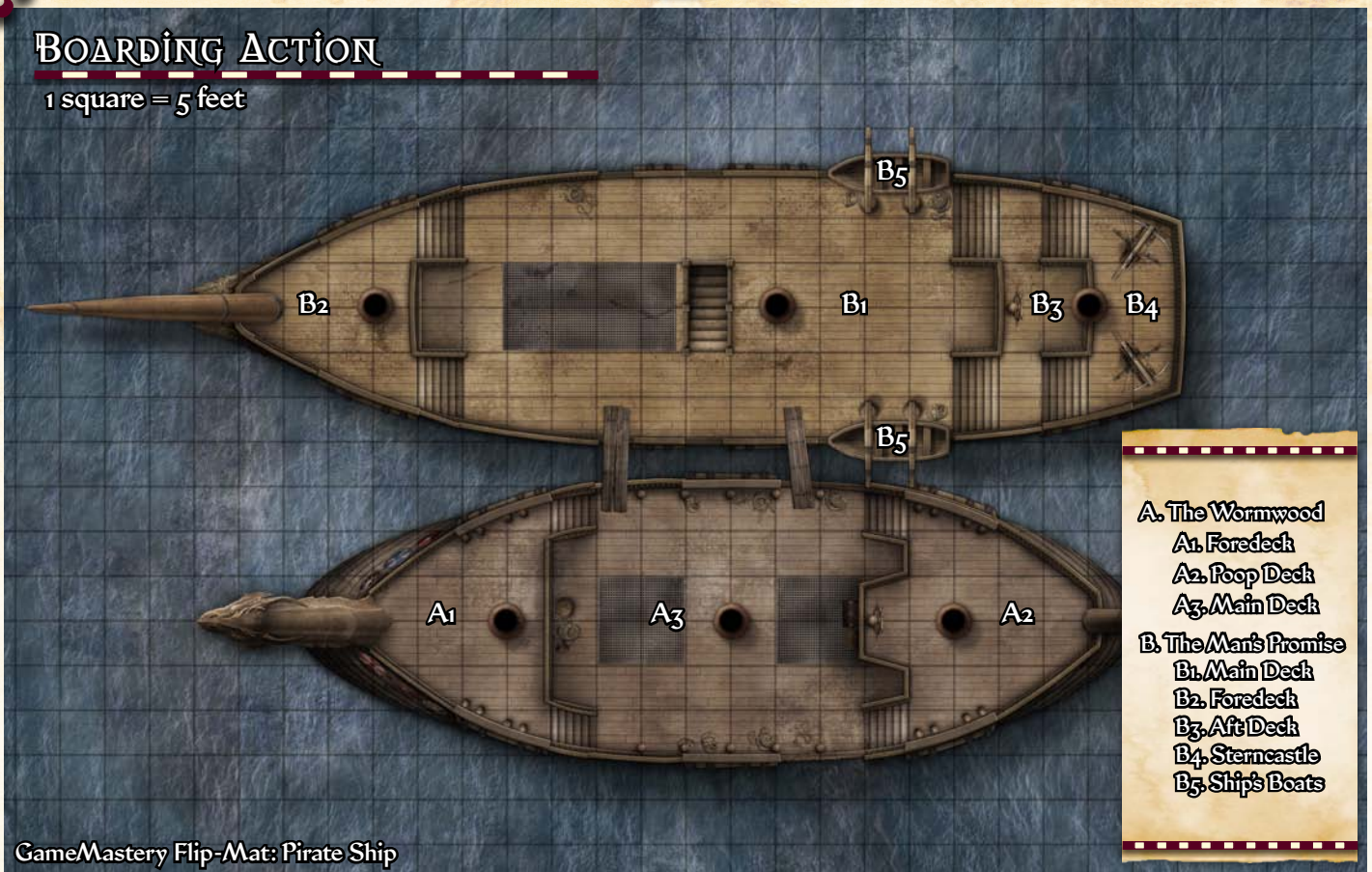
After 4 rounds, the two ships collide, and the pirates begin hurling grapples and lowering planks to board the *Man’s Promise*. The ships remain locked together, as depicted on the map on page 32, until the battle ends.

Although the PCs have only a relatively small part to play in this fight, try to give your players a cinematic experience of the battle. Describe the noises of fighting that drift out of the mist, which occasionally parts to give the PCs a glimpse of the larger battle. As pirates and Rahadoumi sailors fall or are thrown into the sea, let the PCs hear their screams as they’re ripped apart by sharks. Finally, describe the hush that falls over the two ships as the battle finally nears its end.



BOARDING ACTION

1 square = 5 feet



- A. The Wormwood**
 A1. Foredeck
 A2. Poop Deck
 A3. Main Deck
- B. The Man's Promise**
 B1. Main Deck
 B2. Foredeck
 B3. Aft Deck
 B4. Sterncastle
 B5. Ship's Boats

GameMastery Flip-Mat: Pirate Ship

THE SEA (CR VARIES)

During the battle, the sea around the ships is calm (DC 10 Swim check). Characters who fall overboard can make a DC 10 Climb check to climb back aboard a ship.

Creatures: Six sharks swim in the water around the two ships, drawn to the site of the battle by the slaughtered pigs thrown overboard by Kroop and his mate. Characters who fall overboard are not likely to be alone for long. Each round a character spends in the water, there is a 1 in 3 chance of being attacked by a single shark. After one successful attack (either from or against a shark), the blood in the water makes it a 1 in 3 chance that two sharks attack, and so on.

SHARKS (6) CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 22 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 247)

TACTICS

Morale If two sharks are killed, the others ignore other prey in the water to feast upon their own kind.

ROUND 1: BOARDING ACTION (CR 4)

The PCs must cross from the *Wormwood's* poop deck (area A2) onto the aft deck of the *Man's Promise* (area B3). They

must first grapple the *Man's Promise*, as described on page 29, then climb or jump across to the other ship. The PCs are considered flat-footed for the first round they are on the *Man's Promise*, because of the difficulty of climbing over the ships' rails and finding footing on the enemy deck.

Creatures: Six Rahadoumi sailors guard the aft deck of the *Man's Promise* (two on the aft deck [area B3] and four on the sterncastle [area B4]). They attempt to repel the pirates at all costs. Sailors on the sterncastle are considered to be on higher ground and gain a +1 bonus on melee attack rolls against opponents on the aft deck.

RAHADOUMI SAILORS (6) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Human expert 1/warrior 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 11 each (2 HD; 1d8+1d10+2)

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Melee short sword +2 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +2 (1d10/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat The sailors fight in a well-organized way, firing their crossbows at any PCs attempting to board or cutting the grappling ropes as the PCs are attempting to cross. Once the PCs reach the deck, the sailors attempt to bull rush boarders over the side, then draw their short swords to defend their ship, working as a group to outflank opponents.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 6 hit points, a sailor withdraws to the sterncastle (area **B4**) but continues fighting with his crossbow. If reduced to 3 hit points or fewer, a sailor flees or surrenders.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Athletic, Rapid Reload

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +7, Heal +4, Perception +3,

Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +7

Languages Common, Osiriani

Gear studded leather, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, short sword, 10+1d6 gp

ROUND 3: THE CAPTAIN'S BACK

Whether or not the PCs have defeated the sailors on the aft deck, at this point the fog parts, allowing the PCs to see Captain Harrigan and two officers rushing madly for the doors to the captain's cabin below the aft deck, slashing and hacking as they move. Have the PCs make DC 10 Perception checks. If successful, the PCs notice a Rahadoumi sailor sneaking up behind Harrigan.

If a PC attacks and hits the sailor or alerts Harrigan, the captain turns just in time and slays the sailor. Harrigan glances up at the PC who acted and nods in recognition. If the PCs take no action, the sailor hits the captain from behind. Although Harrigan survives the attack (and immediately kills his attacker), he looks around and notices the PCs who could have warned him. The repercussions of this event are detailed at the end of the battle (see page 34).

ROUND 5: EXPLOSION!

An explosion rocks the *Man's Promise*, as Kipper sets off a barrel of alchemist's fire somewhere belowdecks. Although badly burned, Kipper survives the explosion.

ROUND 6: FLEEING SAILORS (CR 2)

Creatures: Three Rahadoumi sailors appear out of the fog, hoping to board the starboard side ship's boat (area **B5**) and escape the battle. The sailors must make three DC 10 Profession (sailor) checks or Dexterity checks (each a full-round action) to release the boat.

RAHADOUMI SAILORS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 32)

ROUNDS 7–10: THE BATTLE TURNS

Through the fog, the PCs can see the Rahadoumi crew scattering or surrendering. Below, Captain Harrigan momentarily appears, gripping what appears to be a human heart in his hands.

ROUND 11: ABANDONING THE SHIP (CR 3)

Creatures: A senior Rahadoumi officer and two sailors appear on the main deck, intent upon fleeing in one of the ship's boats (area **B5**). The officer makes for the starboard boat (if it's still there; otherwise, she heads for the portside boat) and attempts to untie the boat. If the fleeing sailors in round 6 managed to partially untie the boat, the officer needs less time to launch it.

RAHADOUMI OFFICER

CR 2

XP 600

Female human ranger 3

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 24 (3d10+3)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 feet

Melee *boarding pike of repelling* +6 (1d8+4/x3) or

mwk short sword +4 (1d6+2/19–20) and mwk short sword +4 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +5 (1d10/19–20)

Special Attacks favored enemy (animals +2)

TACTICS

During Combat The officer orders the two sailors with her to attack the PCs while she tries to release the boat. She uses the extended reach of her *boarding pike of repelling* to keep attackers at bay.

Morale If reduced to 5 hit points or fewer, the officer decides to take her chances with the sharks and dives into the sea.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Blind-Fight, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +7, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +6, Survival +6, Swim +6

Languages Common, Osiriani, Polyglot

SQ favored terrain (water +2), track +1, wild empathy +4

Gear chain shirt, *boarding pike of repelling* (+1 *boarding pike*; see page 58), heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork



short swords (2), colorful clothing set with small pearls (worth 75 gp)

RAHADOUMI SAILORS (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 32)

AFTERMATH

After 16 rounds, the battle ends with the pirates victorious. The fog dissipates, and a line of prisoners from the *Man's Promise* is paraded before Captain Harrigan and the cheering crew of the *Wormwood*.

Aboard the *Wormwood*, a party begins as the pirates celebrate their victory with fine food and drink from the *Man's Promise's* hold. Captain Harrigan holds a meeting with his top officers and divvies up the plunder from

the *Man's Promise* among the crew in the early evening. Bolstered by gold and good drink, the party lasts for 36 hours, well into the next night. Naturally, no work takes place during the party. During this time, the PCs can take up to 5 ship actions of their choice, or do nothing but drink and revel like most of the pirate crew does.

Treasure: Each PC receives 150 gp in coinage as his or her share of the booty, modified by the following factors.

- If the PCs took the aft deck and sterncastle within 6 rounds, they receive three *potions of cure moderate wounds* and a *potion of invisibility*, and each is awarded an additional 100 gp.
- If a PC warned Captain Harrigan as he was being attacked in Round 3, the PCs receive an *amulet of natural armor +1*. If the PCs also killed the attacking sailor, they receive a *+1 short sword* as well.
- If the PCs did not warn the captain when he was being attacked, each PC receives only a half share of plunder (75 gp).
- For each Rahadoumi sailor killed by the PCs, the PCs receive +25 gp to divide among themselves.
- If the PCs killed the Rahadoumi officer in Round 11, they receive an additional 100 gp to divide among themselves. This reward increases to 200 gp if the PCs managed to capture the officer alive.
- For each pirate accidentally killed, deduct 150 gp from the party's reward.

Development: If any PCs did not take part in the battle and are discovered, they are accused of cowardice and given a dozen lashes with the cat before the plunder is distributed. Such characters forfeit their share of the booty.

SKELETON CREW

At dawn, a few hours after the celebration finally winds down, the ship's bell sounds, calling all hands on deck. When the crew is assembled, a long line of captured officers and sailors from the *Man's Promise* is brought on deck and paraded before the crew. Captain Harrigan addresses the captives first, offering a place on the *Wormwood's* crew for any who want to throw their lot in with pirates. Several of the Rahadoumi sailors step forward; Master Scourge cuts their bonds, and the sailors take their places among the *Wormwood's* crew. Harrigan then turns to address the *Wormwood's* crew.

"All right, you scurvy tars! You've done a right good job by me—we've got a second ship now, and she's quite a prize from the looks of her. But I still have only one crew. So here's the plan—the *Wormwood* will sail on to our planned destination with our new shipmates here, while Mr. Plugg will pick a skeleton crew to sail the *Man's Promise* to Port Peril, where she'll be worth a pretty penny as salvage.



Rahadoumi Officer

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

“As for these fine fellows here”—Harrigan gestures at the remainder of the captured ship’s crew—“some of them will no doubt be worth a hefty ransom from their families back in Azir. And for the rest, if the life of a pirate’s not for them, they can spend the rest of their lives at sea!”

To make his point, Harrigan grabs one of the Rahadoumi sailors and throws her overboard to the accompaniment of cheers and laughter from the *Wormwood*’s crew. As the unfortunate woman sinks beneath the waves, many of the remaining sailors scramble to swear their loyalty to Harrigan. The officers are led belowdecks and the crew begins to disperse to their daily tasks.

As they do, Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge pick out several of the *Wormwood*’s original crew, telling them to be aboard the *Man’s Promise* within 10 minutes to set sail for Port Peril. The PCs are chosen to join the skeleton crew as well, and Scourge smiles evilly at them as he picks them. The PCs have little time left on the *Wormwood*, but allow them to gather whatever gear or loot they may have acquired, and give them one last chance to purchase supplies from the quartermaster’s store. If any of the PCs have befriended Cut-Throat Grok, she cries as they leave. If she was made helpful, she gives them a gift worth 100 gp from the stores on parting.

The skeleton crew of the *Man’s Promise* includes Mr. Plugg, Master Scourge, Owlbear Hartshorn, and all of the surviving members of the *Wormwood*’s original crew of sailors, as well as the PCs, Ambrose Kroop (whom the captain is glad to be rid of), Conchobhar Shortstone, Rosie Cusswell, and Sandara Quinn. At this stage, ensure that there at least eight *Wormwood* pirates loyal to Plugg and Scourge (meaning unfriendly or hostile toward the PCs) aboard the *Man’s Promise*. If there are not enough loyal pirates, make up the numbers with Rahadoumi sailors who are naturally grateful to Mr. Plugg for sparing them and allowing them to join his crew. Once everyone is aboard with their gear, the *Man’s Promise* sets sail.

THE MAN’S PROMISE

The *Man’s Promise* is a three-masted sailing ship, 105 feet long and 30 feet wide (see the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide*). A minimum crew of 20 is required to sail her. Unless otherwise indicated, interior walls on the ship are of wood, 2 inches thick (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 20). Doors are of good wooden construction (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18). Interior rooms are unlit during the day (except for those with windows or portholes), and usually have a single hooded lantern for light at night.

The decks and compartments of the *Man’s Promise* are detailed below. The crew of the *Wormwood* has thoroughly ransacked the *Man’s Promise*, and besides those features listed below, the ship is empty beyond common items

VOYAGE OF THE MAN’S PROMISE

The *Man’s Promise* commences her voyage in the Fever Sea, approximately 100 miles southwest of the Slithering Coast, and heads northwest toward the Shackles and Port Peril. Once out of sight of the *Wormwood*, however, Mr. Plugg changes course and heads northeast for an isolated estuary on the Slithering Coast. Just as the Slithering Coast appears on the horizon, a storm strikes, driving the *Man’s Promise* away from the coast and shipwrecking the PCs on Bonewrack Isle.

such as hammocks, lanterns, rope, and a few other mundane objects. At the start of the voyage, Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge assign the crew to berths and cabins on the ship; these assignments are included in the room descriptions below.

B1. Main Deck: Two 10-foot-square hatches sit in the deck forward of the mainmast and open onto the middle hold. Between the hatches and mast, a steep set of wooden steps descends into the middle deck (area **B8**) 15 feet below.

B2. Foredeck: The foredeck rises 10 feet above the main deck. The ship’s nameplate on the hull reads *Man’s Promise*, but a DC 10 Perception check notices a second nameplate beneath it. This second nameplate reads the *Motley*. Further investigation reveals marks in the wood of the hull that indicate that a previous nameplate existed before that one, but it has long since been removed.

B3. Aft Deck: The aft deck sits 10 feet above the main deck, and steps lead up to an even higher deck behind the mizzenmast. The ship’s wheel stands just before the rail overlooking the main deck.

B4. Sterncastle: This high deck sits behind the mizzenmast, 20 feet above the main deck. A pair of light ballistas sit upon this deck, next to a box containing a dozen ballista bolts.

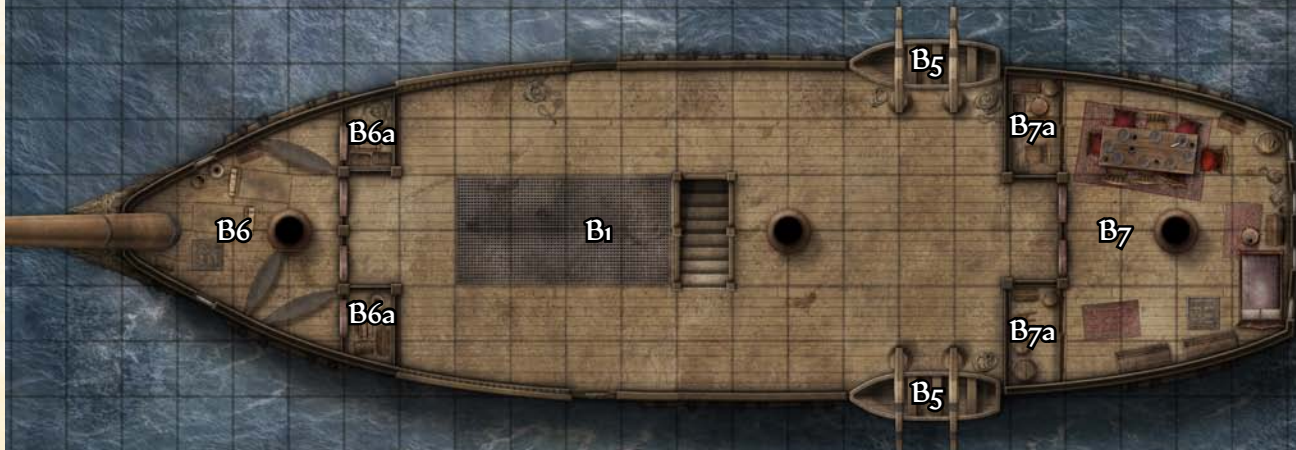
B5. Ship’s Boats: Two ship’s boats, a cutter and a gig (see the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide* for statistics), hang from davits on the gunwales just forward of the aft deck. The boats are lashed to the ship and require three DC 10 Profession (sailor) checks or Dexterity checks to launch. Each such check is a full-round action. Each ship’s boat has four oars and a single mast. The cutter can carry up to 12 Medium passengers, while the gig can carry up to 8 Medium passengers.

B6. Officers’ Quarters: This tidy cabin has two portholes to allow light and fresh air to enter. A hefty trap door sits in the floor, leading to the middle deck (area **B8**). Mr. Plugg assigns Master Scourge and those pirates



THE MAN'S PROMISE

1 square = 5 feet



GameMastery Flip-Mat: Pirate Ship

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

loyal to him to this cabin. He also instructs the two NPCs who are most loyal to the PCs to sleep here, aiming to keep an eye on them.

B6a. Officers' Storage: These two storerooms are both unlocked and hold the lockers and personal effects of those pirates berthed in the officers' quarters (area B6).

B7. Captain's Cabin: The rear wall of this luxurious (by pirate ship standards) cabin holds four gilt-framed windows that rise the full height of the chamber. The cabin contains a luxurious hammock, a dining table and chairs, and a few chests and bookshelves. A trap door opens directly into the cook's cabin below (area B11). The two doors opening onto the main deck and the trap door are locked with good locks (Disable Device DC 30; Plugg has the keys). The windows do not open. Mr. Plugg has claimed this cabin as his own, and has also chained Owlbear Hartshorn to the mast with manacles and a 15-foot-long chain (hardness 10, hp 10, Break DC 26, Disable Device DC 20; Mr. Plugg has the keys), instructing him to kill anyone who enters. Owlbear carries out this instruction unless a PC has befriended him, in which case he follows his friend's lead. The hammock is a *hospitality's hammock* (see page 58).

B7a. Captain's Storage: These small storerooms do not have doors, but are separated by sliding walls that can also be removed and made into a folding table. The starboard compartment contains a small writing desk and a couple of chests. One of the chests is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30) and trapped with an electricity arc trap (*Core Rulebook* 420); this chest holds Mr. Plugg's share of the booty from the *Man's Promise*, worth 2 points of plunder (see page 61).

B8. Middle Deck and Armory: The middle hold of the *Man's Promise* is currently empty, though the weapon racks along the walls only need to be restocked to turn this hold into a working armory. Steps behind the foremast descend into the main hold (area B12). A second set of stairs against the aft bulkhead lead up to the main deck (area B1).

B9. Crew Berths: Ten supporting pillars behind the mainmast fill this spacious compartment, with room for over a score of hammocks. Plugg assigns all of the PCs and their friends to these berths, except for the two NPCs he wants to keep an eye on (see area B6).

B10. Galley: This sizable galley contains a large stove against the aft bulkhead and a single porthole in the starboard wall. In one corner, a derrick stands next to a trap door that opens into the secure storage below (area B13). The door is locked with a huge, good padlock (Disable Device DC 30). It takes a full round to raise or lower the line on the derrick, which can lift up to 200 pounds of cargo. The galley has been stocked for the journey to Port Peril, but the food is scant at best.

B11. Cook's Cabin: This filthy cabin contains two dirty hammocks and a single porthole in the port wall. A rickety

ladder ascends to a trap door in the ceiling, leading to the captain's cabin (area B7). Ambrose Kroop sleeps here, and he has also stashed a small barrel of rum he managed to secure from Cut-Throat Grok before leaving the *Wormwood*.

B12. Main Hold: Essentially empty after being looted by the crew of the *Wormwood*, the main hold of the *Man's Promise* contains a large water barrel secured to the starboard wall. Stairs behind the foremast lead up to the middle deck (area B8), while a trap door near the mainmast leads to the bilges, which contains two bilge pumps, forward and aft. If anything, there are more bilge spiders there than in the *Wormwood*.

B13. Secure Storage: This large compartment aft of the main hold is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30), but is presently empty.

DAY 1: NEW SHIP, OLD RULES

As the *Man's Promise* sets sail, acting captain Mr. Plugg and his first mate Master Scourge gather the crew together to inform them that although this is a new ship, the rules are the same, though discipline on the *Man's Promise* will be a good deal harsher than on the lackadaisical *Wormwood*—all crimes are now punishable with the cat instead of the whip. All of the crew keep the same jobs they had before on the *Wormwood*, but they will have to work a good deal harder, as the crew is smaller. From now on, the DC to avoid fatigue for a daily task increases by +2, and PCs must now make DC 8 Constitution checks to avoid fatigue for those tasks where no fatigue chance previously existed. Master Scourge ensures that the PCs continue to have the worst jobs of the crew for the remainder of this journey (you should assign the PCs the worst duties or the duties they most hate every day rather than rolling randomly).

As night falls, the sails of the *Wormwood* disappear over the horizon. Mr. Plugg does not believe in crew entertainment or rum rations, and anyone caught above decks after dusk without leave gets six lashes with the cat. At your discretion, gambling might still go on belowdecks, but it is quite likely that Plugg and Scourge will hear about it and act accordingly. That night, Plugg, Scourge, and those pirates loyal to them hold a secret meeting in the captain's cabin (area B7), where they plot to sail the ship not to Port Peril, but to a dry dock on the Slithering Coast called Rickety's Squibs, where they can make the *Man's Promise* their own and engage in piracy for themselves. Plugg and Scourge want only the most loyal crew with them, however, and plan to do away with the PCs and their friends as soon as Rickety's Squibs is in sight.

DAY 2: WHISPERS OF MUTINY

Friendly NPCs begin whispering their concerns to the PCs on the second day of the voyage. If the *Man's Promise* is sailing back to Port Peril, what is to become of the



BRINGING TO A SLOW BOIL

The adventure continues with the PCs sailing away from the *Wormwood* and allegedly heading toward Port Peril. However, the ship is soon blown off course in a storm and grounded on an isolated island. Keeping up suspense in the closing stages of the adventure requires you to perform a tricky balancing act.

As written, the adventure assumes that the PCs and their friends stage a mutiny and overthrow Mr. Plugg and Maser Scourge at the conclusion of the adventure. If the PCs decide to mutiny beforehand, you can go along with their plans, play out the mutiny to its logical conclusion, and then have the *Man's Promise* run aground on Bonewrack Isle as written. Alternatively, if you wish to follow the adventure as written, it's a simple matter for some of the PCs' allies to have second thoughts about mutinying, especially while the *Wormwood* is still feasibly within striking range. These friendly NPCs should urge the PCs to take their time and plan such an attack so that it's most likely to succeed.

group of press-ganged crew? Rumors begin to spread among the friendly NPCs that Mr. Plugg might decide to claim the *Man's Promise* for himself and establish himself as a pirate captain in his own right. These rumors become more certain when a friendly NPC deduces (if the PCs haven't already) that the ship has changed course and is heading east toward Bloodcove, a notorious port on the edges of the Mwangi Expanse. If the PCs have not considered staging a mutiny themselves, friendly NPCs begin making that suggestion for them, but only when the time is right.

During the evening, Kroop suggests to the PCs that he knows where the *Man's Promise* might be heading—to a seedy, isolated dry dock on the Slithering Coast west of Bloodcove called Rickety's Squibs. For a price, old Rickety Hake completely refits ships into "squibs," providing new identities by changing ships' lines, silhouettes, and general appearance to be unrecognizable to their former owners or anyone else familiar with them.

DAY 4: A STORM AND A SLITHERING HOST BY NIGHT (CR 4)

A storm hits the *Man's Promise* in the early hours of the fourth day. The wind blows with incredible force, driving the *Man's Promise* far off course. The ship is tossed about on the high seas, and all hands are called on deck to work, including the cook's mate. All of the crew is required in the rigging, and the PCs are assigned random tasks from

the rigger task list. The DC of all such tasks increases by +2. Toward dawn, as the sky begins to brighten almost imperceptibly, the storm redoubles its ferocity, and dark shapes loom out of the sea all around the ship—small islets and coral reefs that dot this area.

Unknown to the crew, the *Man's Promise* is approaching the shores of Bonewrack Isle (detailed in Part Three). The island's grindylow inhabitants see the beleaguered vessel and approach it in the raging seas, subtly slithering aboard to capture a few tasty sailors. At this point, the storm is considered a powerful storm with strong winds (*Core Rulebook* 438–439), and visibility is practically zero, making Perception checks all but impossible. The stormy water requires DC 20 Swim checks, but the grindylows can easily take 10 on their checks, and a small number manage to climb aboard and spirit away two of the ship's crew, likely without any of their shipmates seeing.

Creatures: The success of the kidnapping emboldens the grindylows, and six more of the creatures climb aboard in search of prey, only to run into the PCs. The grindylows immediately attack, attempting to trip opponents and knock them overboard into the churning waters, but once half of them are slain, the remainder flee, slithering over the side in a squall of green tentacles and vanishing into the stormy sea.

GRINDYLOWS (6)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 148)

DAY 5: SHIPWRECKED

As the storm begins to abate, the *Man's Promise* hits the coral reefs surrounding Bonewrack Isle and runs aground. As the sun rises and the tide goes out, the members of the crew slowly come to terms with their predicament. The *Man's Promise* is holed in the main hold (area B12) on the starboard side near the ship's water barrel. A DC 15 Craft (ships) or Profession (engineer) or (sailor) check is enough to surmise that although the ship is not in immediate danger of sinking, she'll eventually sink unless repairs are made, even if the bilge pumps are operated 24 hours a day. Mr. Plugg immediately instructs several of the crew to begin dismantling the ship's deck to repair the vessel.

Early in the morning, Mr. Plugg calls the roll of the crew, and two of the ship's sailors are discovered to be missing. One of the missing crew members is Sandara Quinn; the other should be chosen randomly from among those pirates most friendly to the PCs. If the PCs search the ship for clues, a DC 15 Perception check or DC 20 Survival check finds signs of where the grindylows clambered aboard, as well as Sandara's holy symbol of Besmara on the deck, dropped when she was captured by the grindylows.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

Mr. Plugg is dismissive of the two pirates' fate, declaring that they were washed overboard during the storm. If the PCs suggest that the grindylows were responsible or propose a rescue mission, Plugg immediately forbids it, claiming that it is better to lose a few expendable scum and get the ship to Port Peril than to risk crossing Captain Harrigan.

At the same time, the crew discovers that the ship's water barrel burst when the vessel ran aground and is now empty. Mr. Plugg orders the PCs to take the ship's cutter (see area **B5**) and a couple of empty barrels and find fresh water and supplies on the nearby island. Plugg refuses to consume any magically created food or water, fearing it might be poisoned. He tells the PCs that the repairs will take a day and a half, and that the ship will sail at the first high tide thereafter. That gives the PCs 48 hours to get to the island, find supplies (and rescue Sandara), and return, or the ship will leave without them. In fact, Plugg has had enough of the PCs and intends wait for their return to kill them before sailing. See page 50 for the events that take place when the PCs return to the ship.

PART THREE: BONEWRACK ISLE

The *Man's Promise* has been holed on the edges of a coral reef surrounding a small tropical island, called Bonewrack Isle. A huge ridge towers over the island's western portion. A single raised tor glowers across the isle at the imposing ridge, with miles of jungle lying between the two.

A tribe of grindylows have lived in caverns beneath the isle for decades, but the island is well off the normal shipping lanes, and receives few visitors. Three years ago, however, the Chelish scout ship *Infernus* ran aground here. While most of her crew was lost to the weather, a small group of survivors managed to make it to shore. Most of the survivors soon fell victim to ghoul fever (see area **C5**), but one castaway, a man named Arron Ivy, survived longer than the others and even managed to ransack the wreck of the *Infernus*. The futile efforts of his last days still remain on the island at area **C8**.

With the arrival of the *Man's Promise*, the grindylows were able to sneak aboard and make off with two prisoners—Sandara Quinn and another shipmate. These unfortunate sailors now await rescue by the PCs in the grindylows' lair, Riptide Cove (area **D**).

BONEWRACK ISLE FEATURES

The waters around Bonewrack Isle are crystal clear (visibility 320 feet), but the island is surrounded by coral reefs, which lie between 5 and 25 feet beneath the surface and grant a +5 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks made within the reef. Despite the beauty, however, the tides around the island are vicious, particularly along the western shore. Even on calm days, the DC of Swim checks is the same as in rough water (DC 15), and creatures that fail a Swim check by 5 or more are dragged farther out to sea at a rate of 30 feet per round by the strong currents.

With the exception of the swamp to the east (see The Swamp on page 40), the majority of the isle is covered in thick jungle—considered dense forest with heavy undergrowth. Unless they are using one of the few narrow paths traversing the jungle, characters traveling through the jungle must make DC 16 Survival checks to avoid becoming lost.

The rocky cliff that towers over the island to the northwest is some 500 feet high and covered by trees in many places, particularly the more shaded northwest slopes. A DC 20 Climb check is required to scale the cliffs, but in places of significant vegetation (as indicated on the map on page 42) the Climb DC is reduced to 15. A single path ascends the cliff as well, leading to the castaway's stockade atop the summit (area **C8**). Simple steps have been carved into the cliff and the vegetation has been cleared along the path, requiring only a DC 5 Climb check to reach the top.

All along the perimeter of the island, the grindylow inhabitants have left "shepherds"—small, twisted "statues" made of the sinew-twined, scrimshaw-covered skeletons of their prey. These statues lurk in the shallows of the sea and on the edges of lagoons, and hang from palm trees on the fringes of the jungle. No two are alike; each is the product of a twisted imagination. The bones show signs of trauma and gnawing, a fact obvious to anyone who makes a DC 10 Heal check while examining one of the creepy statues.

If the PCs approach the island in the *Man's Promise's* cutter, they discover there are no safe landings along the island's west and northwest coasts. They must sail around to the island's eastern side to find a safe landing. The two most likely sites to make a safe landing are the abandoned fishing village (area **C3**) and Crab Palm Beach (area **C6**).



Bonewrack Shepherd



GHOUL FEVER-INFESTED BOTFLIES AND MOSQUITOES

The Chelish scouting vessel *Infernus* (area C9) was carrying some unpleasant passengers when it ran aground on Bonewrack Isle—a small pack of ghouls used as shock troops by the captain. These ghouls escaped the wreck and subsequently infected the local botflies and mosquitoes with ghoulish fever. These vermin are not normally dangerous—they rarely swarm and generally only come out at night, but the disease they carry makes staying on the island dangerous.

Creatures spending the night anywhere on the island that does not have a substantial body of flowing water beneath (such as the hulk of a ship or on a raft) must make a DC 10 Fortitude save or be bitten by a botfly or mosquito carrying ghoulish fever. Creatures that are bitten must make a DC 13 Fortitude save to avoid contracting ghoulish fever (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146). Normal means to prevent insect attacks, such as vermin repellent (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Adventurer's Armory* 11) or spells such as *repel vermin*, keep the flies at bay.

THE SWAMP (CR VARIES)

A swampy salt marsh covers the eastern end of the island, functioning as a deep bog (*Core Rulebook* 427). A path crosses the swamp from area C3 to area C5, and then into the jungle, and is used by the ship's whores in area C5 to hunt on most nights.

Creatures: Each day the PCs spend in the swamp there is a 50% chance of encountering a mosquito swarm carrying ghoulish fever. In addition, at night there is a 50% chance of encountering 1d3 of the ship's whores from area C5 out on a hunt. The ghouls travel as far as area C7 but no farther, as they fear the ankheg that inhabits the fields.

MOSQUITO SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

hp 31 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 193)

Special Attacks disease (ghoulish fever, DC 13)

SHIP'S WHORES (1–3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male or female ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 each

C1. THE MAN'S PROMISE

The holed merchantman-turned-pirate vessel rests on the edge of the coral here, lodged on the reef, which lies but 5 feet beneath the water's surface at low tide.

C2. THE FIST

A glowering fist of rough granite rises from the jungle on the eastern end of the island. The Fist is approximately 50 feet high and is fairly easy to climb (DC 10 Climb check). The summit of the Fist commands not only a fine view of the sea and the *Man's Promise* (area C1), but also of the fields that form a break in the jungle (area C7), as well as the castaway's stockade on the ridge to the west (area C8), which can be seen with a DC 15 Perception check.

An old beacon fire also sits atop the summit. The beacon is some 10 feet across and consists of trees, branches, and old ship's timbers, but is unlit. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check discover a store of six torches and a pair of tindertwigs in undergrowth nearby.

C3. ABANDONED FISHING VILLAGE

A small gathering of collapsed mud huts sits on the island's northern beach. The village has not been inhabited for decades, ever since the grindylows first came to the isle. A path leads away from shore into the nearby swamp toward the mire (area C4).

C4. THE MIRE (CR 4)

The pathway slips suddenly into a large green bog. Remnants of an old wooden bridge cross the bog, but only short timber platforms on either side remain, leaving just the pilings jutting from the mud.

A salt river oozes through the swamp here, forming a solid barrier of quicksand and marsh some 70 feet across (see the map on page 42). This is the only place to cross this stretch of the swamp, unless the PCs want to climb the cliffs at the swamp's western edge (Climb check DC 20). The mire is composed of quicksand (*Core Rulebook* 427), making it dangerous to cross, but PCs who succeed at a DC 10 Perception check notice the tree canopy overhanging the mire. The PCs can climb through the branches some 20 feet above the mire with a DC 20 Climb check, or they can climb up a tree (Climb check DC 15), lash a rope, and swing across with a DC 10 Acrobatics check. The PCs can also jump across the pilings sticking out of the mud with DC 10 Acrobatics checks as well.

Creatures: A pair of giant frogs make their home in the mire. The frogs stay submerged in the mire until characters attempt to cross it, then attack with their tongues, hoping to pull opponents into the mire. The frogs are hungry and fight until killed.

GIANT FROGS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 15 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 135)

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

C5. WHORES' BOUDOIR (CR 4)

A terrible stench fills the swamp here, a fetid odor of cheap perfume and rotting flesh. A huge tree stands in the middle of a clearing in the swamp, draped with some sort of huge tent. Lurid, painted faces cover both the tree trunk and tent, and both are decorated with rotting humanoid body parts and carpets of squirming insects.

When the ghouls aboard the *Infernus* escaped the wreck, the local botflies and mosquitoes quickly spread their affliction among the surviving crew. The three ship's whores fell victim to ghoul fever first, transforming into ghouls and turning on the rest of the crew. The ghouls devoured the survivors one by one, but were unable to reach Arron Ivy, fearing the cliff paths leading to his stockade (area C8). The three whores now lair in their boudoir, the remnants of a considerable tent lashed around a great tree (see the map on page 42). Inside the tent are more rotting human remains, a huge pile of filthy clothes, and a vast bed of moldering cushions at the base of the tree. Clouds of flies dance above the decay.

Creatures: Three ghouls, the rotting remains of the experienced harlots from the *Infernus*, occupy the tent during the day, dressed in decaying silks and vermin-infested dresses. At night, the three whores go on the hunt, following paths across the isle looking for prey.

SHIP'S WHORES (3)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Male or female ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 each

Treasure: Among the piles of revealing clothing inside the tent are a *potion of cure moderate wounds* in a leather hip flask depicting a crocodile (worth 25 gp), three very sharp, oft-used daggers (one of which is masterwork), a chest containing six flasks of alchemist's fire, two barrels of very cheap perfume worth 25 gp each, a wedding dress inlaid with pearls and set with three tiny rubies (worth 400 gp), a whalebone corset set with mother-of-pearl inlays worth 20 gp, a dozen silver hatpins set with tiny obsidians worth 5 gp each, scattered gems worth a total of 250 gp, 56 gp, and 97 sp.

C6. CRAB PALM BEACH (CR 2)

Towering palm trees stretch along a white sand beach for a mile or so, each around 50 feet high and crowned with a wide canopy of palms brimming with coconuts. Shattered coconuts litter the beach beneath three of the trees, noticeable with a DC 10 Perception check.

Creatures: Among the many normal coconut crabs inhabiting this beach are three crabs that have reached great size. These crabs can generally be found in the

upper reaches of the palm trees surrounded by the smashed coconut shells. Although the crabs inhabit separate areas of the beach, they use the same tactics. If they spy a likely looking fleshy meal passing beneath their trees or are disturbed in any way, the crabs quickly descend the palms and attack.

GIANT CRABS (3)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 50)

C7. THE FIELDS (CR 3)

A clearing in the jungle contains overgrown fields of some sort of corn. The crops have gone wild, creating a high barrier wafting gently in the breeze.



Ship's Whore



BONEWRACK ISLE

1 square = 1/5 mile



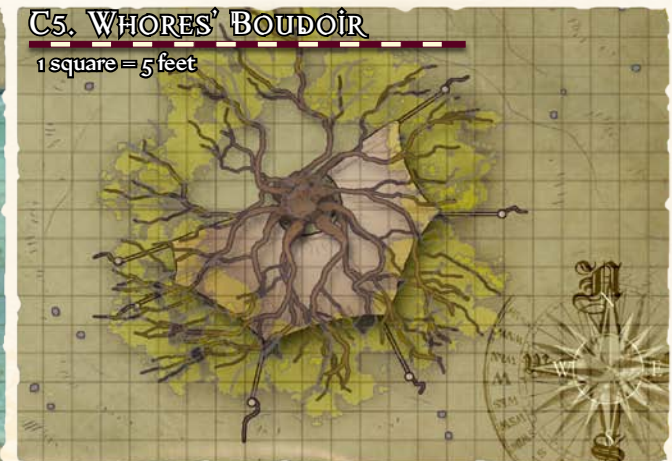
C4. THE MIRE

1 square = 5 feet



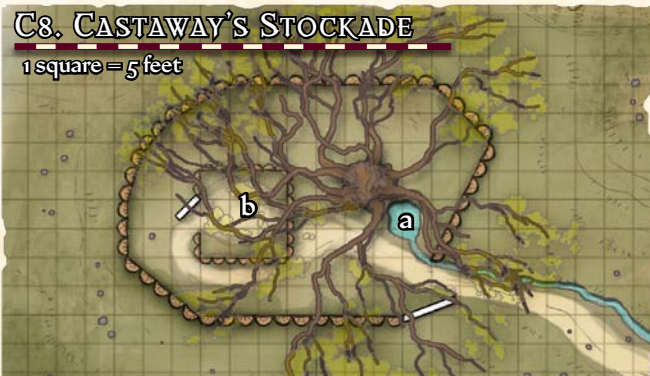
C5. WHORES' BOUDOIR

1 square = 5 feet



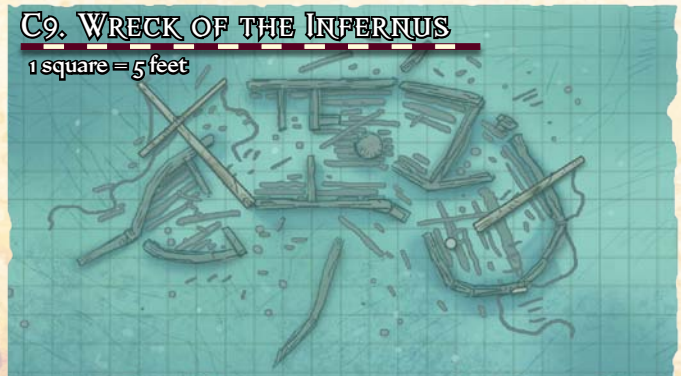
C8. CASTAWAY'S STOCKADE

1 square = 5 feet



C9. WRECK OF THE INFERNUS

1 square = 5 feet



THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

These fields were planted by the castaway Arron Ivy in his first few days here, but attacks from the ghouls from area C5 drove him back. Having no interest in crops, the ghouls left the fields alone and now a sizable area covering just over a square mile lies neglected here. There is only one track through the cornfield, but it requires a DC 15 Survival check to follow. The cornfield has grown to over 8 feet in height and provides concealment for those within it, reducing visibility to 5 feet. Characters making a DC 25 Perception check notice the occasional exposed jawbone or other skeletal remains of a humanoid taken by the creature living below the fields.

In several places, Ivy erected scarecrows topped with the heads of dead sailors as a warning to the ghouls, but these rotting fetishes had no effect upon the undead. Some eight heads litter the fields next to the main path, each impaled on a crude staff 6 to 9 feet high. These rotting heads are now infested with botflies carrying ghoulish fever, which swarm around the heads in ugly black clouds. Creatures that strike, remove, or otherwise tamper with the heads release a swarm of botflies that immediately attacks.

Creatures: In addition to the botfly swarms infesting the heads, an ankheg lurks beneath the soil. The ankheg uses its tremorsense to locate passing creatures, burrows beneath the prey, and attacks from below, trying to use its grab attack to pull victims into the ground. The ankheg does not have a network of tunnels beneath the fields, as game is scarce here, but because visibility is so low, the ankheg might be able to attack, take its prey, and disappear without anyone else noticing.

BOTFLY SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

Variant mosquito swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 193)

hp 31

Special Attacks disease (ghoul fever, DC 13)

ANKHEG

CR 3

XP 800

hp 28 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 15)

Treasure: The bodies of several who visited the island over the years lie throughout the fields, but an extensive search is required to locate all of the booty without magic, as the treasure lies with separate bodies throughout the area. A DC 25 Perception check is required to locate

each body with valuables. One body has a *potion of water breathing* attached by a metal hook to a rotting leather belt with a gold buckle worth 25 gp. A second body has a rusted iron dagger in a scabbard inlaid with pearls worth 75 gp. A third body still grasps a purse containing 45 gp and 3 small obsidians worth 10 gp each in a skeletal hand.

C8A. CASTAWAY'S STOCKADE (CR 4)

A well-built timber stockade surrounds a small lodge in a jungle clearing. Vines wrap and strangle a great tree that rises next to the lodge, blocking light from above. Beside it is a bubbling spring.

The castaway Arron Ivy, the last survivor of the crew of the *Infernus*, built this stockade (see the map on page 42). The stockade gate is ajar and the walls are made of sharpened wooden stakes 7 feet high. A DC 10 Climb check is required to clamber up the tree. The small spring next to the tree is the only available source of fresh water on Bonewrack Isle (and the reason Arron Ivy built his stockade here). The PCs can get as much water here as they need to replenish the water barrels on the *Man's Promise*.

In addition, a DC 10 Perception check notices a weathered spyglass fixed onto the stockade wall. The spyglass is pointed at Riptide Cove (area D1) and a DC 15 Perception check is enough to recognize that the spyglass has been deliberately fixed in that position. If the PCs look through the spyglass, they can catch a glimpse of pair of grindylows cavorting in the water of the cove. A DC 20 Perception check notices that one of them is wearing Sandara Quinn's tricorne hat—a clue as to the missing pirates' whereabouts.

Creatures: Two vine chokers hide in the branches of the tree 10 feet above the ground. These chokers have camouflaged skin that helps them hide in the trees and have adapted to life in the jungle, but they are otherwise identical to their subterranean cousins. The chokers attack anyone passing under the tree, attempting to draw victims up and strangle them.

VINE CHOKERS (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

Variant choker (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 45)

hp 16 each

Treasure: The spyglass affixed to the stockade wall is weathered but still functional, and is worth 750 gp. The



Botfly-Infested Head



chokers' lair sits 70 feet above the ground in the uppermost boughs of the tree. It contains a *potion of water breathing*, a trio of silver shoe buckles worth 5 gp each, a ghoul finger with a gold wedding ring on it worth 50 gp, and a silver hatpin worth 5 gp.

C8B. STOCKADE LODGE (CR 4)

The wooden door to the lodge is of good construction (hardness 5, hp 15) but is currently ajar. Inside is a single chamber, crowded with a large amount of furniture looted from the wreck of the *Infernus*, including a comfortable bed (formerly the captain's), a small writing desk, cooking gear, and several barrels of rotting food. The stench of rot is overpowering and flies swarm within the room, particularly around the hooded corpse hanging from a chain off a beam in the middle of the room. A stool lies on the floor nearby where it was kicked.

Creatures: Arron Ivy, the last survivor of the wreck of the *Infernus*, is the hanged man. Alone on the island, beset by the ship's ghoulish whores, and already suffering from ghoul fever himself, Ivy decided to take his own life

using a Chelish hangman's collar, a wide leather collar attached to a chain, designed for more efficient hangings. Unfortunately, the device didn't function properly in Ivy's amateur hands, and the castaway was left hanging for days as he eventually succumbed to ghoul fever.

Now transformed into a ghost, Ivy has been unable to free himself from the collar and its rusty iron chain (hardness 8, hp 8, Break DC 24). He dreams of escape, but upon hearing the PCs in the stockade, he remains still until someone comes within striking distance, at which point he attempts to grapple the person. If he manages to grab an opponent, Ivy uses his victim to lift himself and try to escape the collar, which he manages with a DC 15 Escape Artist check (Ivy gets a +4 bonus on the roll). Without such a lever, escape is impossible for the undead. Once freed, Ivy attacks with bite and claws. If unable to free himself, he lashes out at anyone within his reach with his claws. Ivy fights until destroyed.

Ivy's stench fills the entire room, and the reek of his decay has drawn a swarm of ghoul fever-infested botflies to his body, which attack any living creature entering the lodge.

ARRON IVY CR 2

XP 600

Male ghost (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146, 294)

hp 17

BOTFLY SWARM CR 3

XP 800

Variant mosquito swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 193)

hp 31

Special Attacks disease (ghoul fever, DC 13)

Treasure: Among the furnishings in the lodge are a suit of leather armor, six spears, and eight finely tailored courtier's outfits, worth 30 gp each. A DC 15 Knowledge (nobility) check identifies the clothes as Chelish in style, while a DC 15 Perception check finds a silver *ring of swimming* in the pocket of one outfit. In addition, the lodge contains a spice cabinet holding 5 pounds of pepper in waxed bags (worth 10 gp total), a silver tankard worth 30 gp, and a silver locket depicting a beautiful, buxom young blonde woman (one of the ship's whores from the *Infernus*) worth 45 gp.

C9. WRECK OF THE INFERNUS (CR 4)

The rotting hulk of a shipwreck leans in a bed of coral just off the shore.

The wreck of the Chelish scout ship *Infernus* lies on a reef in shallow water here, some 20 feet below the surface at low tide (see the map on page 42). Although the *Infernus*



Vine Choker

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

is badly damaged, its gargoyle figurehead still glowers from the seabed and its nameplate can be found with a DC 10 Perception check. A close inspection of the hulk and a DC 15 Knowledge (geography) or (history) or Profession (sailor) check identifies the ship as *Chelish*. A large rusty cage, big enough for three Medium creatures, can be easily seen among the sunken remains of the *Infernus*. The cage is still locked, but its iron bars have been pried apart by force. The cage once held the ship's caged ghoul pack.

Creature: A young giant moray eel now lairs in the barnacled, seaweed-infested hull. The eel hides in the seaweed until likely prey swims by, at which point it attacks. If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, the eel swims away, returning to its lair the next day.

YOUNG GIANT MORAY EEL

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 38 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 119, 295)

Treasure: In addition to several rusted, useless weapons, the following items are buried in the silt among the wreck (a separate DC 15 Perception check is required to find each): three bottles of fine *Chelish* perfume worth 15 gp each, a pair of chopsticks made from manticore spikes worth 15 gp, and three wax-sealed clay ewers containing the ashes of the *Infernus*'s last three captains, their carved names now worn away by the waves.

D. RIPTIDE COVE

The grindylows of Bonewrack Isle inhabit a series of flooded caverns on the island's southwest shore. Led by a twisted druid called the Brinebrood Queen and her beloved son, a freakish and bloated giant grindyflow called the Whale, the grindylows have kidnapped a pair of pirates from the *Man's Promise*. The creatures have been busily interrogating their prisoners and soon learned everything there is to know about the grounded ship. The grindylows are always hungry, so they eagerly await any rescuers, such as the PCs. The grindylows know of the human weakness called friendship, and though it is alien to them, it is a tool to feed their sadism and hunger.

If the PCs do not discover Riptide Cove while exploring the island, the Brinebrood Queen sends a pair of grindylows, clearly carrying some of the captured pirates' possessions, to lure more sailors into Riptide Cove. These grindylows spot the PCs on the island, and attempt to signal them from the safety of the water (at least 300 feet from shore), beckoning them slowly back toward Riptide Cove.

If the PCs do not follow them but instead return to the *Man's Promise* to sail away, the Brinebrood Queen orders a full attack, leading all of her followers (except the Whale, who is too big to fit through the narrow tunnels) into battle against the ship and its crew.

RIPTIDE COVE FEATURES

Riptide Cove is a series of low natural tunnels and caverns around a deep central chamber known as the Cauldron (area **D8**). Save for tiny air pockets above some of the larger caverns, the complex is completely submerged at high tide, so be sure to familiarize yourself with the underwater combat rules on page 432 of the *Core Rulebook*. At low tide, the tunnels are mostly free of water, but many of the caverns remain half-flooded.

The tunnels are littered with partially eaten bones sucked clean of flesh. The grindylows decorate these bones with strange scrimshaw, and tie them together with sinew to create revolting "sculptures" resembling lurking horrors and twisted sea creatures from the depths, the product of sadistic and almost alien minds. Other features of the caverns are detailed below.

Lake of Hooks: In various locations throughout their lair, the grindylows have rigged up floating hooks in the seaweed. These cruelly barbed hooks are attached to pieces of cork by thin, strong sinews and float between 1 and 3 feet from the floor. While they deal no damage, the hooks grab the clothing and armor of those passing through them. When entering such an area on foot or by swimming through the seaweed, the PCs must make a DC 10 Reflex save or be snagged by the hooks and become entangled. A snagged creature can escape with a DC 10 Escape Artist check or by breaking the hooks with a DC 10 Strength check. The only way to avoid the hooks is to swim above them or clear them from an area (hardness 2, hp 12, Break DC 18 per 5-foot square).

Riptide: The caverns are deep, but still subject to the tides. The caverns are almost completely flooded at high tide, which occurs twice per day at roughly 12-hour intervals. The side-view map of the caverns shows the water level at low tide. The waters are very murky because of the endless tides, with a visibility of 10 feet. Unless otherwise indicated, Swim check DCs are 10 while within the complex.

Seaweed: Seaweed grows thick on all cavern floors between 5 and 8 feet deep. The DC of all Acrobatics checks made to walk on such surfaces are increased by +5.

D1. RIPTIDE COVE (CR 3)

High cliffs surround a deep cove churning with dark seawater.

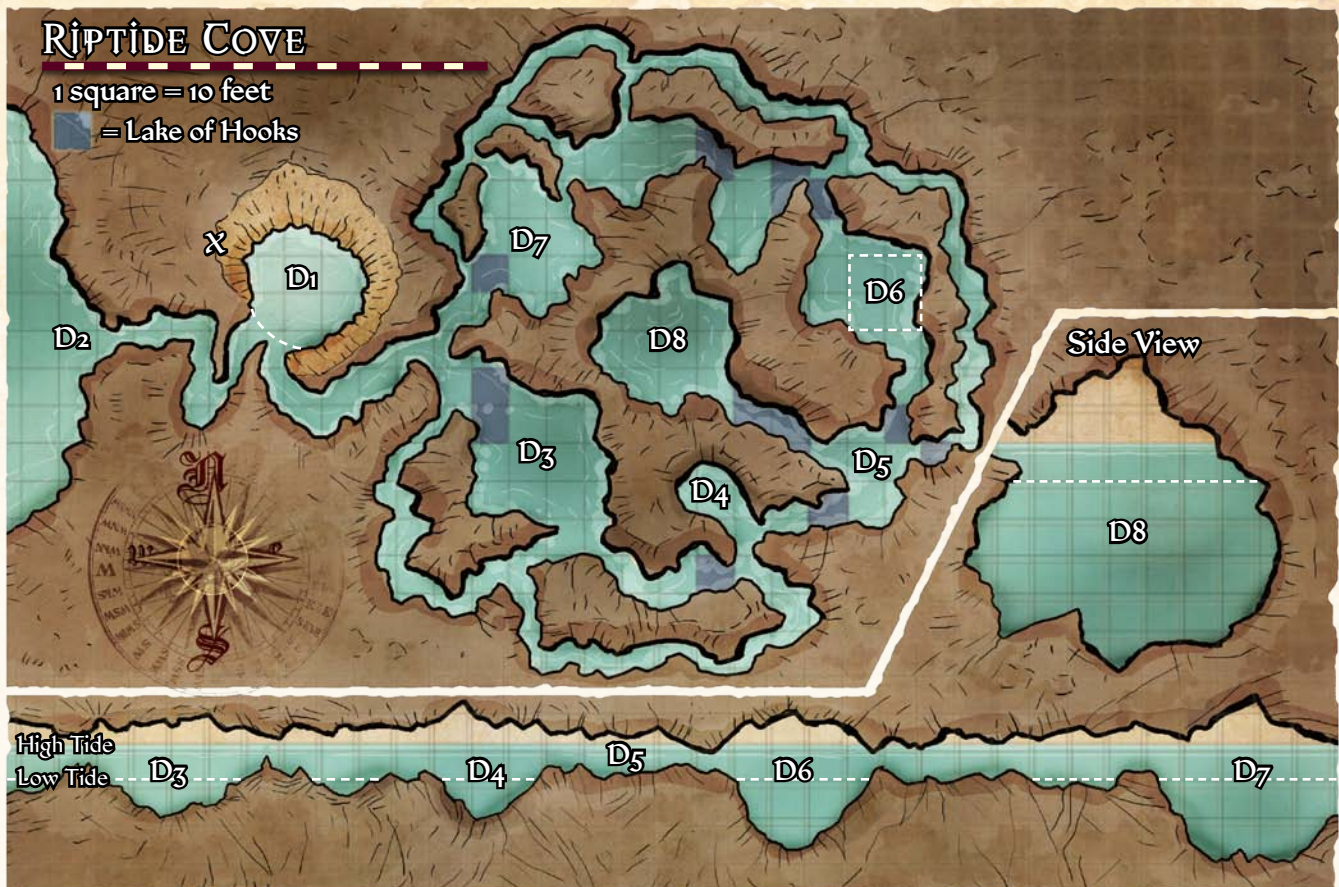
The cliffs around the cove vary in height from 40 to 80 feet. A DC 15 Climb check is required to scale them. The cove is deep, nearly 50 feet in places, and the tidal waters churn considerably, requiring a DC 15 Swim check to navigate. A DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or Profession (sailor) check is enough to notice that the cove's dark waters indicate the absence of rocks below the surface.



RIPTIDE COVE

1 square = 10 feet

= Lake of Hooks



The PCs can dive directly into the water from above with a DC 15 Acrobatics or Swim check (DC 20 if the leap is from higher than 50 feet). A PC who succeeds at the check takes no damage, while a failed check results in 2d3 points of nonlethal damage plus 1d6 points of lethal damage per 10-foot increment dived beyond 40 feet.

Creatures: Eight stirges nest on the cliffs 20 feet above the sea, at the point marked X on the map. The nests are built on a narrow ledge beneath a steep rocky overhang, making them difficult to see from above. The stirges attack anything above the surface of the water that passes below them. Only four stirges attack at any one time, swooping down to latch onto opponents. The stirges are cowardly, and if struck, they flee back to their nests, calling pitifully.

STIRGES (8) CR 1/2
XP 200 each
 hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 260)

D2. THE NECK (CR 3)

A narrow tunnel runs between the sea and the open cove (Area D1). The tunnel is just over 100 feet long and is flooded at all times. The ocean churns in this narrow space, which

requires DC 15 Swim checks to traverse. A character who fails her Swim check must make a DC 10 Reflex save or take 1d3 points of damage from the deliberately sharpened walls of bladed stone lining the tunnel.

Creatures: Four grindylows are on watch near the ocean entrance. Their job is to watch the seas for intruders, not the island itself. If the grindylows spot intruders, they flee to the Cauldron (area D8), alerting the other grindylows on the way.

GRINDYLOWS (4) CR 1/2
XP 200 each
 hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2148)

D3. THE FRONDS (CR 5)

The tunnel leading into this natural tidal cavern is decorated with the jawbones of numerous frightful-looking fish, resembling the throat of some hideous aquatic creature.

The seaweed on the floor of this cavern is 8 feet deep.

Creatures: Eight grindylows watch the entrance to the caves here. They attack any intruders, using the seaweed for cover and attempting to swarm opponents. The

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

grindybows attack as few targets as possible; they flank with each other, and use their jet ability to quickly escape as a group in various directions, regrouping for another attack as soon as they can. The grindybows fight to the death.

GRINDYBOWS (8) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 148)

Development: Some of Sandara Quinn's equipment has been given to the grindybows in this cavern, most notably her *Besmara's tricorne* (see page 58), as well as any of her other possessions that you deem appropriate.

D4. THE MESH (CR 3)

The walls of this small cavern display strangely ribbed markings.

Unlike many of the decorations in these caverns, the markings here are simply the result of wave action. Hidden beneath the carpet of seaweed and visible with a DC 20 Perception check are a series of metal bars spaced approximately 18 inches apart. These bars form the cavern "floor" and are wedged in place, requiring a DC 25 Strength check to remove.

Creatures: Two sailors from the *Infernus* are trapped below the bars. Fleeing their fellow shipmates who had succumbed to ghoulish fever, the sailors drowned while attempting to escape the island. Unfortunately, they had already contracted the affliction and were transformed into aquatic ghouls called lacedons. The ghouls lash out at anything that swims or walks across or near the bars, though the grindybows are aware of the lacedons and avoid them.

LACEDONS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Aquatic ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

hp 13 each

Treasure: One of the lacedons still wears the sodden remains of a battered greatcoat with five large silver buttons worth 2 gp each. One of the buttons has a secret compartment (DC 25 Perception check to find) containing an *anchor feather token*. In addition, 120 gp in assorted coinage lies among the decaying crab shells, dead fish, and seaweed at the bottom of the chamber.

D5. THE CATARACT (CR 4)

The tunnel opens into a wider cavern decorated with hundreds of leering skeletal parts, wriggling with worms. Four dark circular openings exit the chamber.

Creature: A devilfish lairs in this cavern, acting as a guard to the Brinebrood Queen in area D8. The grindybows regard the devilfish as incredibly beautiful, and revere the creature as a wise and powerful ally. The worms are small, harmless eels that preen the devilfish, devouring any algae that grows on it.

DEVILFISH CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 88)

TACTICS

During Combat As soon as intruders enter the cavern, the devilfish uses its unholy blood ability to provide it with concealment. It attacks any stragglers with its tentacles and savage bite.

Morale If reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, the devilfish retreats to area D8 to join the Brinebrood Queen.

Treasure: Among the distended skeletal jaws decorating the walls is a dull metal bracelet snagged upon a jawbone. The bracelet is a single *lesser bracer of archery*. If its twin can be found in area D8, the pair functions normally.

D6. THE DROWNING CAVE (CR 4)

Seaweed fronds sway gently in the current in this broad cave.

Trap: A heavy spiked iron grille, cleverly disguised with barnacles and aquatic plants, hangs from the ceiling of the chamber, poised to fall on intruders and trap them beneath the water.

DROWNING SPIKES TRAP CR 4

XP 1,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect Falling iron grille (6d6 damage, DC 15 Reflex save avoids); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. square). Anyone hit by the trap is trapped beneath the grille. Trapped creatures must make a successful DC 15 Escape Artist check or DC 20 Strength check, or destroy the portcullis (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 28) to escape. Up to six Medium creatures can attempt to lift the portcullis at one time.

D7. THE GULLET (CR 5)

This cavern has been carved to resemble the interior of some great sea creature, its ribs towering over and around the chamber.

The waters of this cavern are deep and form a small eddy of conflicting tides, resulting in a light riptide. The seaweed on the floor of the chamber is 5 feet deep.



Creatures: Eight more grindylows lurk in this chamber. They attack using the same tactics as the grindylows in area D3.

GRINDYLOWS (8) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 148)

Treasure: Among the countless smaller skeletal fetishes here are a scrimshawed hammerhead shark skull with a piece of driftwood thrust through it. The skull is worth 250 gp, while the driftwood is a *wand of mirror image* (23 charges). There is also an ivory walrus tusk set with gold with a scrimshawed map of the Shackles worth 400 gp, and a curious harp made from the jaw of an orca set with pearls worth 500 gp.

D8. THE CAULDRON (CR 6)

Hundreds of remains float in this large bowl of water, which churns with bones, scraps of flesh, and the carcasses of strange, almost alien fish. Just visible through the roiling stew are humanoid bodies floating in the water, wan corpses drifting near the bottom of this cauldron like sleeping guardians.

The water churns and seethes in this cavern, giving occasional glimpses of its contents but mostly concealing anything beneath its surface. Visibility is generally 5 feet or less in the water.

Characters tripped within the Cauldron must make a DC 10 Swim check or begin sinking to the bottom of the chamber at a rate of 15 feet per round.

Two figures hang from the ceiling above the churning water, bound hand and foot with thick strands of seaweed and sinew and weighted with heavy ingots of silver—the kidnapped sailors from the *Man's Promise*, including Sandara Quinn. Both characters are wounded—Sandara is currently at 10 hit points, while the other NPC has but 1 hit point remaining, having been partially eaten alive by the grindylows.

Creatures: The Brinebrood Queen, matriarch of the grindylows of Bonewrack Isle, lives in this cavern with her beloved son the Whale. The Brinebrood Queen claims divine descent from Lamashtu, a patent lie, but her devoted followers believe anything that the unhinged aberration says and worship her as the divine get of gods. When the Brinebrood Queen was blessed with the birth of a son, her focus changed to feeding her progeny, for the Whale never stops growing, and the Brinebrood Queen endlessly seeks sustenance to keep her precious child fed.

The Whale is an obscene, bloated monstrosity with a gaping, toothy maw, now grown more than twice as large as its mother and her followers—so large, in fact,

that it can no longer fit through the tunnels exiting the Cauldron. The Queen regards the Whale's freakish growth as a divine blessing, as well as a warning to keep her precious cherub close.

In addition, two lacedons are chained to the bottom of the cavern with masterwork manacles. The aquatic ghouls attack anything that sinks to the bottom of the Cauldron, but are unable to reach farther than 10 feet up. The pair were formerly sailors on the *Infernus*, and one of the lacedons bears a tattoo of a five-pointed star being eaten by a whale on its naked body. Anyone making a cursory examination of the lacedons notices the tattoo, while a DC 15 Knowledge (history) or (local) check can identify the tattoo as the symbol of the *Majestrix Malus*, a scouting arm of the imperial navy of Chelifax.

As soon as the PCs enter the Cauldron, the Brinebrood Queen screams in hunger and cuts the bonds holding the two captive pirates above the water. The weight of the silver ingots immediately drags them beneath the surface, and they sink to the bottom of the Cauldron the round after. Unless PCs help them, they are quickly attacked by the lacedons on the bottom. Meanwhile, the Queen and her son concentrate their attacks on anyone remaining on the surface.

THE BRINEBROOD QUEEN CR 3

XP 800

Female grindylow druid (aquatic) 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 148, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 98)

NE Small aberration (aquatic)

Init +2 (+4 in aquatic terrain); **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8 (+10 in aquatic terrain)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 26 (5d8+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9; +4 vs. water spells and aquatic or water subtype abilities

Defensive Abilities resist ocean's fury

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., swim 30 ft., jet 200 ft.

Melee *vindictive harpoon* +7 (1d6+4/x3)

Ranged *vindictive harpoon* +7 (1d6+3/x3)

Special Attacks icicle (1d6+2 cold damage, 6/day), tangling tentacles

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd—*barkskin*, *chill metal*, *fog cloud*^D

1st—*entangle* (DC 14), *hydraulic push*^{*}, *longstrider*,

obscuring mist^D, *speak with animals*

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 13), *guidance*, *resistance*

D Domain spell; **Domain** Water

^{*} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

TACTICS

Before Combat The Brinebrood Queen casts *barkskin* and *speak with animals* before combat.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

During Combat The Queen uses her *wand of summon nature's ally II* to summon an octopus (she never summons a squid) to attack foes, then casts *entangle* against groups and *chill metal* against any armor-wearing opponents. The Queen stalks prey through the rot-infested soup of her lair, flanking with the Whale and attacking with her *vindictive harpoon*.

Morale The Brinebrood Queen fights to the death so long as her beloved child survives. If the Whale is slain, however, she uses her jet ability to flee Riptide Cove for the deep waters of the sea.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4 (+8 trip with tangling tentacles); **CMD** 16 (24 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (harpoon), Power Attack

Skills Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (geography) +4 (+6 in aquatic terrain), Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +8 (+10 in aquatic terrain), Spellcraft +4, Stealth +16 (+18 in aquatic terrain), Survival +5 (+7 in aquatic terrain), Swim +16 (+18 in aquatic terrain)

Languages Aquan

SQ amphibious, aquatic adaptation, natural swimmer, nature bond (Water domain), nature sense, wild empathy (aquatic) +5

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *wand of summon nature's ally II* (12 charges); **Other Gear** *vindictive harpoon* (+1 returning harpoon; see page 59), lobster pot containing grindylow flensing knives including two masterwork daggers, a masterwork silver dagger, a rusting masterwork cold iron sickle, a scrimshaw blade of great workmanship depicting an octopus worth 125 gp, and 12 other blades of varying shape and quality

THE WHALE

CR 3

XP 800

Male advanced grindylow (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 148)

CE Large aberration (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (+6 natural, -1 size)

hp 31 (3d8+18)

Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft., swim 30 ft., jet 200 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d8+7 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks swallow whole (1d8+7 damage, AC 13, 3 hp), tangling tentacles

TACTICS

During Combat The Whale's distended mouth enables it to swallow opponents whole, and its hunger drives it to this action, though it may regret doing so later. If a swallowed



The Brinebrood Queen



victim deals damage to the Whale, the giant grindylow vomits up its undigested meal on the following round as a free action.

Morale Unable to leave the confines of the Cauldron, the Whale fights to the death. If the Brinebrood Queen is slain, the Whale flies into an incredible rage, focusing its attacks solely on the character who killed her, ignoring any other threats to avenge its dead mother.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +8 (+12 grapple, +12 trip with tangling tentacles); **CMD** 18 (26 vs. trip)
Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness
Skills Stealth +6, Survival +6, Swim +19
Languages Aquan
SQ amphibious

LACEDONS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each
 Aquatic ghouls (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)
hp 13 each

Treasure: Dozens of scrimshaw objects litter the chamber in various nooks and crannies carved into the walls. Although many of these items are merely curious, repulsive, or both, among them are the jawbone of a shark carved with scrimshaw images of a vast octopus eating whales and containing a dozen silver and gold rings hammered into it (worth 250 gp), a huge hooked tooth from some colossal sea creature with a seaweed-plugged cavity containing six pearls worth 75 gp each, and a whale skull weighing 25 pounds whose scrimshaw carvings function as arcane *scrolls of alter self*, *black tentacles*, *blur*, *color spray*, *daylight*, *enlarge person*, *hypnotism*, *slow*, *touch of idiocy*, and *vampiric touch*.

In addition, a total of eight 4-pound silver ingots are attached to Sandara Quinn and the other captive pirate, each worth 20 gp. The rest of their equipment lies scattered on the floor among the lacedons' masterwork manacles, along with four +1 *heavy crossbow bolts*, a silver spearhead, an iron bracelet (a single *lesser bracer of archery*, the twin of the one found in area D5), 211 sp, and 136 gp in assorted coins.

Finally, Sandara Quinn gives the PCs her *Besmara's tricorne* (see page 58) as a token of her gratitude for rescuing her.

Story Award: Award the PCs 800 XP for successfully rescuing Sandara Quinn.

Development: If the PCs rescue the second captive pirate, that NPC immediately becomes helpful toward the PCs and throws in his lot with them, regardless of his previous attitude. If the NPC was an ally of Mr. Plugg, he

also tells the PCs of Plugg's plan to kill them when they return to the *Man's Promise*.

MUTINY! (CR VARIES)

The PCs can lead a mutiny against Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge at any time, of course, but the most advantageous time is likely when they return to the *Man's Promise* after exploring Bonewrack Isle. If the PCs have not already made such plans, Plugg and Scourge decide to take the PCs out of the picture anyway, and attack the PCs as soon as they return from the island.

Creatures: Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge lead at least eight *Wormwood* pirates loyal to them (those unfriendly or hostile toward the PCs), though this number might vary depending on the PCs' actions and influence on the crew. Owlbear Hartshorn joins them as well, unless he was befriended by one of the PCs, in which case he supports the PCs. Ambrose Kroop and Sandara Quinn fight on the side of the PCs, along with any of the *Wormwood* pirates who are friendly or helpful toward

the PCs. Any NPCs who are indifferent toward the PCs do not participate in the battle. Remember that the advantage goes to the side that acts with surprise, and if the PCs don't act first, Mr. Plugg and his loyal crew attack the PCs and their allies with missile fire as the PCs approach the *Man's Promise* from the sea.

How this battle works out depends upon the circumstances of the mutiny. As the identity and abilities of both allies and enemies depend upon the PCs' actions, the resolution of this battle likely requires some planning on your part, based on who is loyal to whom. If the PCs have overwhelming numbers, Plugg and Scourge might challenge the PCs to face them directly, just the PCs against the two of them. That said, if the PCs have worked hard to befriend the majority of the crew and get those NPCs on their side, then an easy fight between the PCs and their many allies versus Plugg, Scourge, and just a few supporters can be considered the PCs' just reward for their hard work and success in befriendng the crew. However the battle plays out, those *Wormwood* pirates loyal to Mr. Plugg attempt to flee when reduced to 4 hit points, and surrender if Mr. Plugg is slain.



The Whale

MR. PLUGG CR 4
XP 1,200
hp 47 (see page 54)

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY



MASTER SCOURGE CR 3

XP 800

hp 32 (see page 21)

WORMWOOD PIRATES (8) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 11 each (see page 20)

Infamy: Increase the PCs' Disrepute and Infamy scores (see page 62) by 2 for successfully mutinying and taking command of the *Man's Promise*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Regardless of when the PCs stage their mutiny, the crew has finished repairing the *Man's Promise* by the time the PCs return to the ship. But the adventure does not necessarily end when the PCs leave Bonewrack Isle. The PCs might still need to resolve a mutiny, and if the PCs failed to deal with the grindylows on the island, the creatures attack the *Man's Promise* in force before it can set sail.

The Brinebrood Queen lives for her son, and if the PCs defeated the Whale but the Queen escaped, she vows revenge. The Brinebrood Queen flees in madness and

anger into the deepest trenches of the darkest oceans, where light is unknown. In that dark abyss she whispers to obscene things of the night, calling them to the surface to avenge her beloved son, the grandson of a goddess. This gives you a great opportunity to plague the PCs with a returning foe in later adventures.

Assuming the mutiny is a success and Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge are defeated, any surviving pirates are keen to remain aboard under the PCs' command, regardless of their previous affiliation. After all, it's better to serve a new captain than be marooned on a monster-infested flyspeck of an island.

The PCs' new crew does, however, point out that the moment Captain Harrigan hears of their mutiny he is bound to seek vengeance. Unless the PCs suggest it first, one NPC (such as Ambrose Kroop) suggests following Plugg's plan of taking the *Man's Promise* to Rickety's Squibs for a refit to prepare for a new life on the ocean waves.

The adventure concludes with the PCs sailing their own vessel into an uncertain but exciting future. This future, filled with the PCs' adventures as pirates in charge of their own destinies, begins in the next volume of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, "Raiders of the Fever Sea."



AMBROSE “FISHGUTS” KROOP

Ambrose Kroop is technically one of the ship’s officers, but the *Wormwood’s* drunken cook has more in common with the ship’s press-ganged sailors than with its cruel officers.

AMBROSE “FISHGUTS” KROOP CR 2

XP 600

Male middle-aged human rogue 3

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20) or
frying pan +3 (1d6+1)

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Kroop is no fighter, and prefers attacking opponents from behind, preferably with a sneak attack, rather than facing foes in a fair fight.

Morale When the odds are against him, Kroop fights like a cornered dog. He feels he has nothing to lose, and rarely backs down. If protecting a friend, he is fiercely brave, and fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 13

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 15

Feats Catch Off-Guard, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus
(Profession [cook])

Skills Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Climb +5, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +3, Perform (oratory) +7, Profession (cook) +8, Profession (sailor) +5, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +6, Swim +5

Languages Common, Orc, Polyglot

SQ rogue talents (resiliency), trapfinding +1

Other Gear padded armor, daggers (4), frying pan (improvised club), *steadfast grapple* (see page 59), bottle of rum, chicken, clay mugs (2), gold earring worth 5 gp

Most people think Ambrose “Fishguts” Kroop gets his nickname from the stains on his apron or the contents of

his infamous stew, but few know he earned the sobriquet as a competitive eater in the low bars of Port Peril. As a young man, it was said that Kroop could eat more of anything, and faster, than anyone. Folks still talk about the night that Kroop devoured an entire bucket of boiled eggs in the Salty Swab by the docks.

Kroop was trained as a professional chef at the Lobster’s Armor, one of Port Peril’s most popular (and expensive) restaurants, but when he was thrown out for inappropriate behavior with his assistant, he ended up plying his trade with several sailing vessels in the Shackles before embarking on Captain Barnabas Harrigan’s *Wormwood*, where he has served as ship’s cook for the past 3 years.

An affable fellow, Kroop loves his food, and has more recently developed a taste for rum, a habit that’s only encouraged by Cut-Throat Grok, the *Wormwood’s* quartermaster and Kroop’s best friend aboard the ship. Sadly for Kroop, his drinking led him to bet his own life against Captain Harrigan in a card game one drunken night 2 years ago. Kroop lost, and his life became Harrigan’s to do with what he would. Harrigan now thinks as little of Kroop as he does a bilge rat, but he’s not yet killed the cook because drunk as he is, Kroop is still a better cook than anyone else on the *Wormwood*, and the captain is partial to his cooking.

Kroop’s days begin with blearily handing out ship’s biscuits to the crew on deck before retiring to the galley to prepare the evening meal (almost always fish stew) in a big pot. Then he cozies up with a bottle of rum (sometimes mixed with raw eggs) and waits for the rest of the day to pass. Nevertheless, Kroop is a skilled chef, though few of the crew beyond the captain and his officers ever get the chance to sample Kroop’s more palatable fare.

His only joy, aside from drinking and swapping yarns with Grok, are his chickens. Kroop loves his poultry and collects any rare breeds he comes across. Anyone with a background in farming finds Kroop friendly, while those who truly know their birds quickly discover a helpful friend. Kroop’s favorite bird, a large black cockerel named Black-Hearted Bezebel, often perches on the cook’s shoulder and even talks to him, or so Kroop occasionally drunkenly claims.

NPC GALLERY

Kroop is a large, some would say fat, man, weighing well over 200 pounds and standing only 5 feet tall. He exudes an air of neglect, perhaps even despair, from the bushy tufts of black hair behind his ears, to his rotting teeth, to the stains on his filthy apron. He walks with a wallowing waddle, particularly when drunk, but is capable of surprising acts of strength. Kroop talks with a thick Shackles accent, which some people find hard to follow. He's had so many lashes that his back is like tanned leather, and he claims to not even feel the bite of the lash anymore. After 44 years in the school of hard knocks, Kroop is a man who clearly cares little for himself or what people think of him. Nevertheless, he is at heart a kind man, and does his best to protect his cook's mate from punishments brought on by mistakes made by either of them.

GOSSIP

The PCs can learn the following about Kroop with successful Diplomacy checks to gather information.

DC 5: "Fishguts" might once have been a famous chef at that fancy place in Port Peril, but now all he cooks is fishgut stew. He's so pickled in rum now, bilgewater is all he can make.

DC 10: Remember the last cook's mate? Nobody does—only when he disappeared. Just up and vanished, that one, like he was spirited away, or maybe dropped in a pot...

DC 15: Kroop was so drunk once that he bet his life in a game with the captain, and now he's little more than Harrigan's slave.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

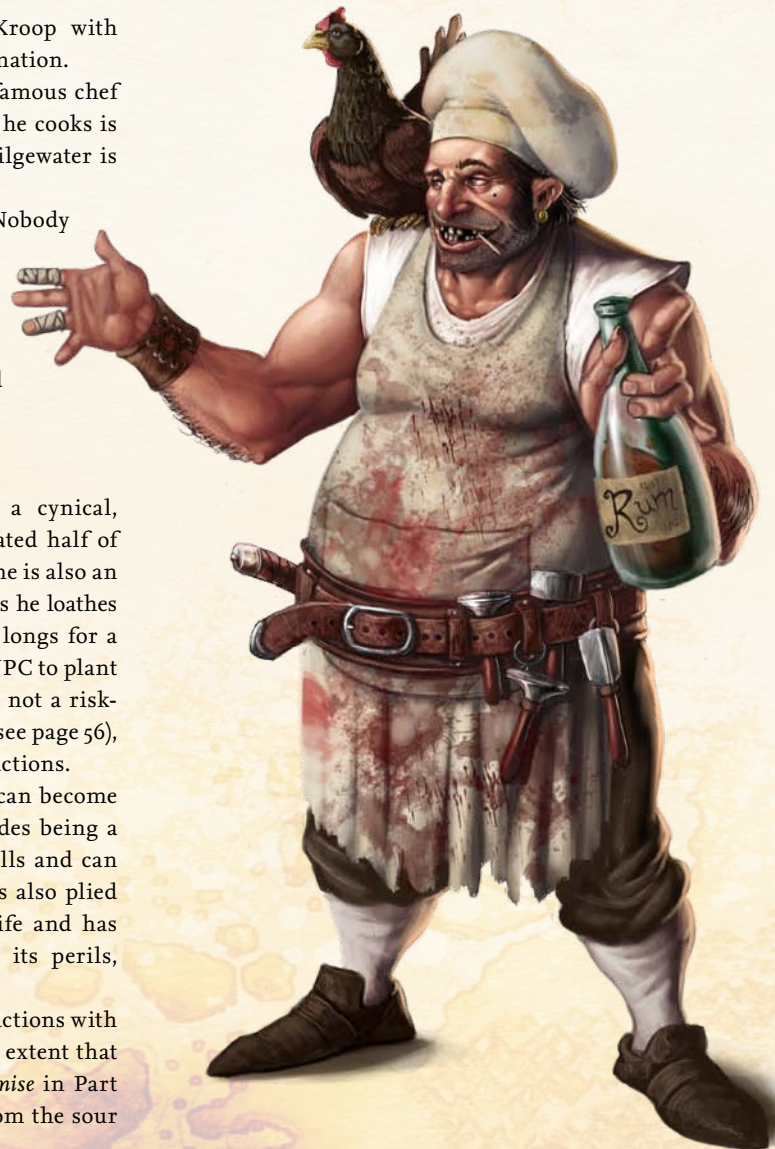
Ambrose Kroop begins the adventure as a cynical, washed up drunk who is insensibly intoxicated half of the time, dreaming of a better life. However, he is also an obvious potential friend and ally of the PCs, as he loathes the captain and crew of the *Wormwood* and longs for a chance to escape. Kroop makes an excellent NPC to plant the idea of mutiny in the PCs' minds. He is not a risk-taker, however, and can, like Sandara Quinn (see page 56), act as a voice of reason as the PCs plan their actions.

If the PCs manage to befriend Kroop, he can become a useful ally for the PCs in the future. Besides being a fine cook, he has handy communication skills and can also help out in a fight if needed. Kroop has also plied his trade in the Shackles throughout his life and has an excellent knowledge of the region and its perils, personalities, and possibilities.

As the adventure progresses, Kroop's interactions with the PCs begin to give his life purpose, to the extent that by the time the PCs move to the *Man's Promise* in Part Two, he begins drinking much less. Away from the sour

atmosphere of the *Wormwood*, Kroop's spirits lighten, and he is only drunk 1 day in every four. When the PCs finally mutiny, Kroop is sober for the event, and aids the PCs as best he can. If the mutiny is successful, Kroop announces that his new friends have inspired him to turn over a new leaf. If the PCs are cutthroats, Kroop throws his lot in with them to begin a new life. If they are kindhearted dandies, Kroop sees in them a more honorable way of life. Regardless, he offers his services as ship's cook to the PCs. His lapses into drinking become less frequent—he is now drunk only 1 day in every week—and continue to be so throughout the rest of the Adventure Path.

It is unlikely that the PCs will make an enemy of Kroop, but should they do so, he gladly assists anyone who wants to kill the PCs. Having had a taste of possible freedom, he wants to punish those who let him taste it before he crawls back into the bottom of a rum bottle to die.





MISTER PLUGG

Mr. Plugg is the *Wormwood's* first mate, second in command to Captain Harrigan himself. A brutal and sadistic bully, Mr. Plugg has no love for the crew serving under his harsh command.

Mr. PLUGG **CR 4**

XP 1,200

Male human fighter 5
NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)
hp 47 (5d10+15)
Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear
Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee *tidewater cutlass* +8 (1d6+6/18–20) and *mwk cat-o'-nine-tails* +6 (1d4+1 nonlethal) or *tidewater cutlass* +10 (1d6+6/18–20) or *mwk cat-o'-nine-tails** +8 (1d4+2 nonlethal)
Ranged light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20)
Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Mr. Plugg always enters combat with his cutlass and cat drawn, and has no compunctions about fighting dirty. He regularly uses Combat Expertise (–2 on attack rolls, +2 AC) to increase his AC, and if he finds that he is unable to hit opponents, Plugg drops his cat-o'-nine-tails and attacks with only his *tidewater cutlass*.

Morale Plugg fights bravely, but if reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, he backs away. If reduced to 12 hit points or fewer, he attempts to flee, hoping to fight another day. He has no loyalty to his captain, crew, or allies, and abandons them without a second thought if it means saving his own skin.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10
Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7 (+11 disarm with cat-o'-nine-tails); **CMD** 20 (22 vs. disarm)
Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (cutlass), Weapon Specialization (cutlass)
Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +10, Perception +2, Profession (sailor) +7, Sense Motive +2, Swim +7
SQ armor training 1
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *screaming bolts* (3); **Other Gear** *tidewater cutlass* (+1 cutlass; see page 59),

*masterwork cat-o'-nine-tails**, light crossbow with 10 bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +1, *shackles of compliance* (see page 58), leather drinking cup, betting stash of 100 sp and 200 gp
* See *Pirates of the Inner Sea*.

Mr. Plugg is an angry young man. He's always furious about something, but somehow his rage simmers like a stew, and even when he loses his temper he quickly seems to gain control again. A sadist and bully, Plugg has had a hard, desperate life—few places are more dangerous to grow up than the dockside streets of the Shackles. Only 21 years of age, the memories and scars of Plugg's formative years are very fresh, and now he intends to have his revenge.

Plugg is also incredibly ambitious—he intends to captain his own ship someday, and he joined the crew of the *Wormwood* purely for his own ends. Thanks to his ruthless devotion to Captain Harrigan's orders, his rise has been meteoric. In just 11 months aboard the *Wormwood*, he has wormed, blackmailed, and murdered his way to the position of first mate, in truth a job well beyond his abilities. He masks his own inadequacies by pointing out those of others.

Everyone on board the *Wormwood* knows that the first mate is the captain's right hand when it comes to dealing with the ship's crew, but Harrigan's other officers form a close inner circle that Plugg can't seem to penetrate, a fact that vexes him to no end. Nevertheless, Harrigan is sure to punish anyone who attacks Plugg, a fact that every member of the crew is acutely aware of.

To Mr. Plugg, honor, friendship, and teamwork are alien concepts. He believes that discipline is the only thing that matters at sea, and that the constant threat of ruthless punishment is the only thing that can keep a crew of cutthroats and scoundrels in line. He strikes first, and asks questions later. Plugg is not a forgiving man, and if someone does get the better of him, Plugg takes time to plot his revenge in the cruelest way he can think of.

Bald except for a black ponytail and sporting long, narrow beard, Mr. Plugg somehow looks angry, miserable, and uncomfortable, all at the same time. Bare-chested, he

NPC GALLERY

wears an immaculate coat with pearl buttons and carries a cat-o'-nine-tails with him at all times. He clearly takes great pride in himself—everything about him shines, from the polish on his boots to the dome of his head. His teeth are gray and yellow, however, and his face is fixed in an almost constant grimace.

GOSSIP

The PCs can learn the following about Mr. Plugg with successful Diplomacy checks to gather information.

DC 5: If Scourge is a bastard, then Mr. Plugg is his mother and father. One piece of advice—do as he says.

DC 10: First mate? He's barely been on board a year! The apple of the captain's eye, that one. Harrigan treats him like a son—but not a legitimate one, of course.

DC 15: That cutlass of his is magical, see, no doubt about that, and he wields that cat like it was his own arm. I've seen him using both in combat. Despite his pettish looks, he's some fighter by all accounts.

DC 20: People who cross Plugg end up dead—stabbed, poisoned, throttled, thrown overboard. Take your pick, they always end up dead. He has friends everywhere, high and low.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Mr. Plugg (and to a similar extent his repulsive sidekick Master Scourge) presents a challenge for you as GM. He is the main villain of the adventure, yet at the beginning he has considerable influence and is practically unassailable. The challenge is to make the PCs loathe him without pushing them to openly attack him, an act that results in keelhauling. The penalty for murder on the *Wormwood* should be enough to keep a lid on your player's desires, but be careful not to overuse his bullying. Plugg oversees the punishments for infractions on the ship, and does so with relish, but it is Master Scourge, his toadying subordinate, who actually carries out most of the disciplining and poisons the first mate's mind against the PCs. Again, be careful not to overplay the bullying and sadism, but make sure it is prevalent. With care, you can develop a brooding hatred in your players for this nasty piece of work, and they'll relish their final encounter with him when the chance eventually presents itself.

If your players are more unequivocal, however, and likely to bring things to a head before leaving the *Wormwood*, you should bluntly remind them of the consequences of murder. If the keelhauling of Jakes Magpie on the first night aboard the ship doesn't do the trick, you can have an NPC whom the PCs are growing close to kill someone early on in the adventure, and be keelhauled as punishment.

Mr. Plugg's burning ambition leads him to make a return later in the Adventure Path should he somehow survive this adventure. At the table, adventures often take a step away from the predicted plot, and "The Wormwood Mutiny" is no exception. The PCs' mutiny aboard the *Man's Promise* may transpire earlier than is written, or circumstances might dictate that Plugg and some of his cronies somehow escape. Plugg is certain to brood upon his lost influence, while avoiding his former captain at all costs. Harrigan is certain to be unforgiving if he finds that Plugg has lost the *Man's Promise* and yet still lives. Plugg limps away and broods on his failure, slowly whispering words to the powerful and great as he plots his revenge. He can appear again as an accomplice of one of the more powerful pirate lords or as a Free Captain in his own right, with a handpicked crew of cutthroats and a dozen disciplinary officers aboard his new ship, the *Severe*.





SANDARA QUINN

Though a devotee of the Pirate Queen Besmara, Sandara Quinn has only recently taken up the pirate's life, when she was press-ganged and forced to join the crew of the *Wormwood*. Positive in outlook and warm hearted, Sandara is quick to make friends with the PCs.

SANDARA QUINN

CR 2

XP 600

Female human cleric of Besmara 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 20 (3d8+3)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +4 (1d6+1/18–20)

Ranged heavy crossbow +3 (1d10/19–20)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 5/day (DC 13, 2d6), surge (+5)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
5/day—copycat (3 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
2nd—*instant armor** (DC 14), *slipstream**^D, *summon monster II*
1st—*command* (DC 13), *doom* (DC 13), *inflict light wounds*
(DC 13), *obscuring mist*^D
o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *create water*, *purify food and drink*, *stabilize*
D Domain spell; **Domains** Trickery, Water (Oceans subdomain*)

* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

TACTICS

During Combat If she is expecting combat, Sandara casts *instant armor*, which increases her AC to 17. Sandara takes every fight seriously, and once she gets started, she finishes things. She targets her opponent with *doom* and summons a small elemental or 1d3 dire rats to fight by her side.

Morale Sandara is almost foolishly stubborn, a quality that might very well get her killed someday. She won't surrender and doesn't back down from a fight unless totally overwhelmed.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Athletic, Combat Reflexes, Scribe Scroll

Skills Appraise +4, Bluff +6, Climb +3, Heal +6, Knowledge (religion) +4, Profession (sailor) +8, Stealth +5, Swim +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear scrolls of cure light wounds (2), scroll of cure moderate wounds; **Other Gear** heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, dagger, masterwork rapier, *Besmara's tricorn* (see page 58), clay pipes (3), ebony holy symbol of Besmara, pouch of Old Deep Rum-soaked pipe tobacco, tindertwigs (10); **Locker** 35 gp

Life is never easy, and Sandara Quinn's life has been typical of that truism. The daughter of a poor fisherman and a seamstress, Sandara was raised in Hell Harbor. Her overworked parents had little time to spend with their daughter, and Sandara grew up on the port's hard streets, where she quickly learned to look after herself. She worked on the docks when she could, carrying out what jobs she could get, and soon developed a keen eye for trouble and a reputation for standing up for herself. She began frequenting the bars and taverns of Hell Harbor by the age of 9 and was learning the ropes of sailing by the age of 12.

Sandara's calling came one night when a fleet of fishermen, which included her father, was lost in a powerful storm. Sandara prayed to Besmara the Pirate Queen, the goddess of piracy, strife, and sea monsters, and when her father returned the following day, weather-beaten and half-drowned but still alive, Sandara knew the goddess had answered her prayers. Soon after, Sandara began devoting her time to the worship of Besmara, eventually setting up a small chapel on the Hell Harbor docks dedicated to her.

Just 3 weeks ago, Sandara's beloved father died, and she took to the sea, determined to live her life to the hilt, not rot away in some forgotten port. She only made it as far as Port Peril, however, before she fell afoul of Captain Harrigan's press gang and ended up aboard the *Wormwood*. There are worse places to be than a pirate ship, however, and Sandara has taken to her new surroundings like a fish returned to the sea from which it was born. She still bears the raw scars of grief from burying her father, but knows enough to mask that grief on a vessel such as the *Wormwood*. Sandara plans to make the most of her present situation, intending to spread the word of her goddess while expanding her horizons at the same time.

NPC GALLERY

Crowned with a mane of fiery red locks, Sandara looks like someone not to be crossed. Yet the smile lines at the corners of her eyes and the easy way she holds herself hint at a lighter side. She dresses to accentuate her figure, and her whole appearance speaks of the sea, from the seagull feather in her tricorne hat to the sailor tattoos on her arms and the clay pipe thrust into the corner of her mouth.

The night before the adventure starts, Master Scourge made a pass at Sandara, and she responded by slapping the boatswain and making it clear that she finds him repulsive. This event has set up a mutual enmity between the two, while also making her a natural ally of the PCs, should they accept her friendship.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Sandara is designed to give the characters an automatic friend among the *Wormwood's* crew—in all likelihood, the only one to begin with. How the PCs first meet Sandara is up to you, but two suggestions might work well. The PCs might already know Sandara before the adventure starts, and she is press-ganged at the same time. Alternatively, Sandara can immediately try to befriend the PCs during their first day on the *Wormwood*, regarding them as kindred free spirits who have been brought aboard against their will. Having already had a falling out with Master Scourge, Sandara is concerned about her own skin and believes the PCs might make for helpful allies.

Sandara hasn't been aboard the ship long, but she already has a good idea of its layout and has heard the other pirates talking, and can share much of this information with the PCs. Use Sandara as a voice of reason between the PCs and the crew, counseling them to avoid attempting anything too dangerous or attracting the ire of Mr. Plugg or Captain Harrigan. She can use her magic to heal injured PCs, and assist them during workdays by adding a +2 bonus on any single check made by a struggling PC, as appropriate.

As the adventure progresses, Sandara has greater roles to play—first as a prisoner of the grindylows on Bonewrack Isle for the PCs to rescue, and later as an invaluable ally of the PCs when they finally mutiny against Mr. Plugg and Master Scourge at the end of the adventure. She can even become a romantic interest for a PC, if you wish.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

If met by chance, a character like Sandara might naturally arouse players' suspicions. Not only is she immediately helpful, but the fact that she returns the PCs' equipment and happily casts healing spells upon her newfound friends may seem too good to believe. Sandara is free of any sinister motives, however, and is just as she seems.

Suspicion can be a powerful tool for roleplaying, but be careful not to overdo it and accidentally push the

PCs into becoming enemies with Sandara. She is a font of useful knowledge and information, but try not to make her too clever or wise. Sandara likes a drink and a gamble, and these qualities can be used to make her seem vulnerable as well as smart. She can play a significant role throughout the entire Adventure Path as a trusted friend of the PCs, and by starting off well you can quickly make her an important NPC ally.

It's extremely unlikely that the PCs make an enemy of Sandara, but if they do, she can become a recurring rival or foe of the PCs. The PCs might very well not be heroes, and their actions may horrify the cleric into joining up with their enemies to oppose them, or might teach her the lesson that no one can ever be trusted, in which case she moves on without them.





SKULL & SHACKLES TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “The Wormwood Mutiny.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the GameMastery Skull & Shackles item card set.

BESMARA’S TRICORNE

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th
Slot head; **Price** 2,600 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This black leather tricorne hat is weather-beaten and salt-stained. It grants its wearer a +2 competence bonus on Profession (sailor) and Swim checks.

If Besmara is your patron, once per day you can speak a command word to transform the hat into a small ship’s boat such as a cutter, jolly boat, or longboat (see the *Skull & Shackles Player’s Guide*). The boat is 20 feet long, has two pairs of oars and a single mast with a square sail, and can carry up to 12 passengers and crew. Upon command, or after 8 hours, the boat returns to hat form, dumping out any occupants.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *guidance*, *shrink item*, creator must have 5 ranks in Profession (sailor); **Cost** 1,300 gp

BOARDING PIKE OF REPELLING

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th
Slot none; **Price** 4,308 gp; **Weight** 9 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This +1 *boarding pike* (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea* 18) is an 8-foot-long pole topped with a tapered metal spearpoint and a backward-facing hook, used to draw vessels closer together or repel boarders. A metal skull caps the butt of the pike. On command, a *boarding pike of repelling* can be extended as a swift action, giving its wielder a reach of 20 feet for 1 round. While the pike is extended, the wielder does not threaten adjacent creatures or creatures up to 15 feet away. A *boarding pike of repelling* can also be extended in this way to draw vessels closer together for boarding.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *wood shape*; **Cost** 2,308 gp

HOSPITALITY’S HAMMOCK

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 5th
Slot none; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A luxurious crimson silk hammock embroidered with gold thread and gold fringed tassels, a *hospitality’s hammock*

is a beauty to behold, but no self-respecting seaman would ever be caught using it. Aside from the hammock’s considerable looks, a single night’s rest in it eliminates any sign of seasickness (see page 26). Additionally, a *hospitality’s hammock* is so comfortable that those who sleep in it for a full 8 hours regain hit points as if they had an entire day of bed rest. Climbing into or out of the hammock is a full-round action. A successful DC 5 Dexterity check reduces this to a move action.

The captain of the *Man’s Promise* was particularly susceptible to seasickness, and commissioned this item to make his long voyages away from home more comfortable. Although he would never admit it to those under his command, Mr. Plugg was pleasantly surprised to find the *hospitality’s hammock* in his cabin when he took command of the *Man’s Promise*, and has slept in it every night since.

The *hospitality’s hammock* originally appeared on page 72 of Necromancer Games’ *Dead Man’s Chest*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *cure light wounds*, *remove disease*; **Cost** 2,500 gp

SHACKLES OF COMPLIANCE

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 3rd
Slot none; **Price** 2,810 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These battered iron manacles magically adjust themselves to fit around the wrists or ankles of any creature from Small to Huge size and automatically lock. A creature wearing *shackles of compliance* becomes more susceptible to intimidation. Any creature attempting to intimidate or demoralize a target wearing *shackles of compliance* gains a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks. In addition, the holder of the manacles’ key can cast *command* (DC 25) on the wearer of the shackles three times per day.

Shackles of compliance have hardness 10 and 10 hit points, and a DC 30 Disable Device check is required to pick the shackles’ lock. A manacled creature can break free with a DC 28 Strength check or DC 35 Escape Artist check, or the lock can be opened with a DC 30 Disable Device check.

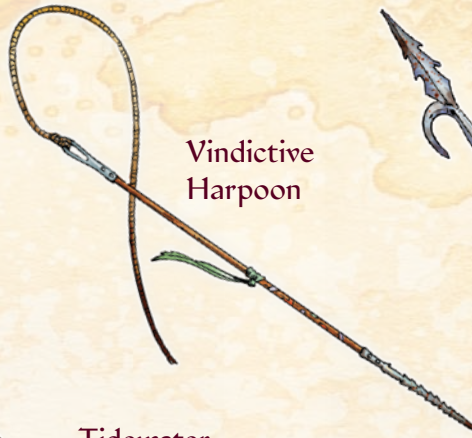
CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *command*; **Cost** 1,470 gp

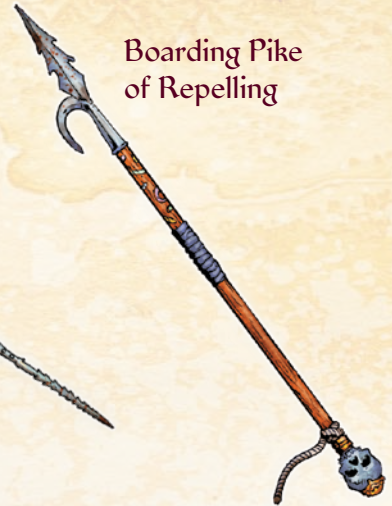
SKULL & SHACKLES TREASURES



Shackles of Compliance



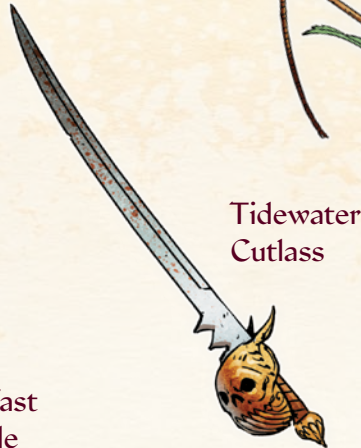
Vindictive Harpoon



Boarding Pike of Repelling



Steadfast Grapple



Tidewater Cutlass



Besmara's Tricorne

STEADFAST GRAPPLE

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot none; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** 9 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This iron grappling hook is attached to a 50-foot length of silk rope. When a *steadfast grapple* is thrown, it automatically hits and attaches to any targeted object or structure within range of its rope. Against creatures, the wielder must make attack rolls as normal. Once attached, a *steadfast grapple* can only be removed with a DC 30 Strength check, the command word, or magic such as *dispel magic*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate rope*, *true strike*;
Cost 2,500 gp

TIDEWATER CUTLASS

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 3rd
Slot none; **Price** 3,395 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The blade of this +1 *cutlass* (*Pirates of the Inner Sea* 18) is spotted with rust, and its basket hilt is cast in the likeness of a grinning skull. Once per day, a *tidewater cutlass* can be used to cast *hydraulic push*.

Tidewater cutlasses are not uncommon weapons among the pirates of the Shackles, at least for those who can afford

to buy one or who manage to loot one from someone who can. Mr. Plugg acquired his cutlass from a seasoned old tar aboard the *Wormwood* who had the temerity to point out the first mate's insecurities, and was beaten to death for his impudence. When more traditional discipline techniques prove ineffective, Mr. Plugg has been known to use his *tidewater cutlass* to "accidentally" push impertinent sailors overboard to drown in the *Wormwood's* wake.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hydraulic push* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 228); **Cost** 1,855 gp

VINDICTIVE HARPOON

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 9th
Slot none; **Price** 10,305 gp; **Weight** 16 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This +1 *returning harpoon* (*Pirates of the Inner Sea* 18) is made from the jagged, scrimshaw-carved tusk of a narwhal attached to a 50-foot length of woven sinew. Unlike most thrown weapons, a *vindictive harpoon* functions as well underwater as on land, and its wielder takes no penalties on attack rolls underwater.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *freedom of movement*, *telekinesis*; **Cost** 5,305 gp



THE LIFE OF A PIRATE

They came aboard, all blades and screams. We didn't have any fight in us, and they took our provisions, our extra sails, all of our tools, and our fat sot of a captain's gold. Then they asked who the chief carpenter was. When everyone looked my way, they clapped hands on me and dragged me across to their ship. That was one year, ten battles, and twice as many ports ago. Had I known that I'd be better off on a pirate's ship than on a merchant's vessel...

"Well, it reminds me of part of a song the sailors sang when I used to cut planks for the Shipwrights' Guild: 'There's a ship that's a leavin' Quent, and on you'll quickly sign. The captain's a tyrant, the bosun's worse, but she'll a-suit ya fine.'"

—Mathis Trevain, Master Carpenter aboard the *Emerald Wake*

THE LIFE OF A PIRATE

Those sailing under the fearsome flag of a pirate vessel live by different guidelines than those protected by the laws of the Inner Sea's nations. A pirate's life, for the most part, depends upon a foundation of respect and reputation, a scallywag's propensity for daring raids or flaming ruin having aftershocks extending far beyond the decks of his own ship. In the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, characters find themselves thrust into the cutthroat lives of pirates. Their success, and potentially their survival, will depend on reputations garnered from their decisions, outrages, and panache. The following presents details and subsystems allowing GMs to track their PCs' increasing reputation, which has ramifications throughout the Adventure Path, as well as several other systems and side games to help simulate the day-to-day responsibilities and dangers of being Shackles pirates.

PLUNDER & INFAMY

The acquisition of wealth and the spread of grim reputations motivate pirates to deeds of daring and depravity. The following two subsystems present GMs with ways to gauge and track their PCs' success at achieving what all pirates desire most. Although the PCs' situation in "The Wormwood Mutiny" prevents them from gaining much in the way of plunder or infamy in this adventure, their fortunes rise considerably in future adventures.

PLUNDER

There's a difference between plunder and the gold pieces in a pirate's pocket. While gold doubloons and fabulous jewelry can be plunder, pirates are rarely lucky enough to encounter a ship with a hold full of such treasures. Typically, there are trade goods, foodstuffs, spices, and valuables of a more mundane sort. Such takes can fetch significant prices, but for scallywags more interested in looting than the specifics of what they loot, this system provides a way for parties to track their plunder without getting bogged down by lists of commonplace cargo and their values down to the copper piece. Aside from streamlining the collection of riches, this system also allows characters to increase their infamy, paying off crew members and spreading their wealth with more appealing dispensations of loot than what was aboard the last merchant ship they robbed.

Winning Plunder: What gains a group plunder is largely decided by the GM or is noted at the relevant points throughout the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path. Typically, at any point the PCs claim a ship's cargo, conquer an enemy's hideout, or find a significant treasure, there's the potential for a portion (sometimes a significant portion) of that wealth to translate into plunder. Plunder means more than five wicker baskets, a barrel of pickled herring, three short swords, and a noble's outfit; it's a generalization of a much larger assortment of valuable but generally useless goods

PLUNDER & INFAMY QUICK REFERENCE

The following terms feature prominently in the plunder and Infamy subsystems, and are called out for ease of reference.

Disrepute: The amount of Infamy the PCs have accrued through successful Infamy checks, which can be spent on impositions. Costs measured in Disrepute are marked with a price.

Infamy Check: A Bluff, Intimidate, or Perform check made to gain Infamy and Disrepute. The DC of this check equals 15 + twice the group's average character level. Spending plunder grants bonuses on this check.

Impositions: Incredible deeds and outrageous acts that grant the PCs a variety of benefits or impose crippling consequences on their victims. Higher tier impositions become available as PCs reach higher Infamy thresholds.

Infamy Threshold: Ranges measured in Infamy. Upon achieving new Infamy thresholds, additional impositions become available for purchase.

Plunder: An approximation of valuable but non-useful cargo. One point of plunder is worth about 1,000 gp, and takes up 10 tons of cargo capacity, unless otherwise noted.

Infamy: The highest total number of points of Disrepute achieved by making successful Infamy checks, representing the PCs' total reputation. This number cannot exceed the PCs' average party level \times 4 but rarely, if ever, decreases.

(and serves to help avoid bookkeeping on lists of random goods). Rather, a cargo ship carrying construction timber, dyed linens, crates of sugar, animal furs, and various other goods might equate to 4 points of plunder. Just as when awarding more standard forms of treasure, a GM doling out plunder should consider the challenge of winning the plunder and the actual value of the plunder if the PCs cash it in (see below). As a rule of thumb, GMs seeking to give the characters a minor reward might give them 1 point of plunder, while a major reward would be 5 points of plunder.

Plunder is not meant to serve as a replacement for more standard forms of treasure. GMs should still award characters gold and magic items to keep them prepared to face new challenges, whereas plunder serves as a useful shorthand for what varied mundane treasures are discovered and can be sold for values in gold. Characters can also buy plunder if they wish, though those who do so risk becoming known as merchants rather than pirates.

Value of Plunder: Plunder is valuable for two reasons: It can be sold for gold pieces, and it helps you increase your Infamy (Infamy is further detailed below). In general, 1 point of plunder is worth approximately 1,000 gp, whether



it be for a crate full of valuable ores or a whole cargo hold full of foodstuffs. Regardless of what the plunder represents, getting the best price for such goods is more the domain of merchants than pirates, and just because cargo might be worth a set amount doesn't necessarily mean the PCs can get that much for it. Exchanging 1 point of plunder for gold requires a PC to spend 1 full day at port and make an applicable skill check. Regardless of how much plunder the PCs have, one PC must spend a full day trading to exchange 1 point of plunder for gold. The PC trading also must be the same PC to make the skill check to influence the trade. The larger the port and the higher the skill check, the better price the PCs can get for their plunder. At smaller ports there's little chance of getting more than half value for plunder, unless a PC can employ a skill to make a better deal. At larger ports, the chances of finding a buyer willing to pay a reasonable price for cargo increases, and PCs can still employ skill checks to make even more lucrative bargains. PCs seeking to win a higher price for their plunder can make one of the following skill checks and apply the results to the table below: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or any applicable Profession skill, like Profession (merchant). A poor result on a skill check can reduce the value of plunder. If the PCs are not satisfied with the price they are offered for their plunder, they need not take it, but a day's worth of effort is still expended. They can try for a better result the next day.

The table below explains how much PCs can expect to get for their plunder in communities of various sizes, the skill check DC required to increase this amount by a set percentage, and the maximum amount buyers in a community can be convinced to buy plunder for. Each column is explained in brief here.

Community Size: The size of a community is determined by its population, noted in every community stat block and further detailed in the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

Base Sale %: Every community is willing to buy plunder from the PCs, but not necessarily at its full value. This column lists the percentage at which a community is willing to buy 1 point of plunder (along with that percentage's expression in gold pieces).

DC to Increase Sale: This is the skill check DC required to increase the sale percentage a community offers for

plunder. Every community can be convinced to offer more for plunder (to a maximum sale percentage listed in the final column of the table below), but this requires the PCs to make a skill check. The DC of this skill check is 10 + an amount determined by how much the PCs are trying to increase the sale percentage. For example, if a PC is unwilling to accept a mere 20% of the value of his group's plunder when attempting to sell it in a hamlet, he can attempt to increase this percentage by 5% by making a DC 15 skill check. If he wants to attempt to increase the percentage to 30% (the maximum amount the hamlet can possibly pay), he must make a DC 20 skill check. Failure results in no increase, and this skill check can only be made once per day. In larger communities, the DC to increase these percentages rises, but the percentage also increases, as does the maximum percentage buyers can be talked up to.

Maximum Sale %: This is the highest percentage at which a community can be talked into buying 1 point of plunder. Merchants in a community will never buy plunder for a higher price than this. Additionally, this column lists the skill check DC required to haggle buyers up to this percentage, and how much the percentage is worth in gold pieces.

Spending Plunder: In addition to its value in gold pieces, plunder is vital to increasing a pirate crew's Infamy. See the Infamy subsystem for more details.

Buying Plunder: Although gold typically proves more valuable and versatile than plunder, some parties might wish to exchange their traditional wealth for plunder. In any community, a party can buy 1 point of plunder for 1,000 gp. What form of goods this plunder takes is determined by the GM.

INFAMY AND DISREPUTE

Some pirates only do what they do for the promise of wealth, being little more than brigands of the waves. Others do it for the reputation, fearsomeness, and power that comes with numbering among the most notorious scallywags on the seas. That's where Infamy comes in. Numerous times over the course of their careers, the PCs—as members of a single pirate crew—will have the opportunity to recount their victories, boast of the treasures they've won, and spread tales of their outrages. All of this has the potential to win

Community Size	Base Sale % (GP for Plunder)	DC to Increase Sale	Maximum Sale % (Max DC & GP for Plunder)
Thorp	10% (100 gp)	10 + 5 per 5%	20% (DC 20; 200 gp)
Hamlet	20% (200 gp)	10 + 5 per 5%	30% (DC 20; 300 gp)
Village	30% (300 gp)	10 + 5 per 5%	40% (DC 20; 400 gp)
Small town	40% (400 gp)	10 + 5 per 5%	60% (DC 30; 600 gp)
Large town	60% (600 gp)	10 + 5 per 5%	80% (DC 30; 800 gp)
Small city	80% (800 gp)	10 + 10 per 5%	90% (DC 30; 900 gp)
Large city	90% (900 gp)	10 + 10 per 10%	120% (DC 40; 1,200 gp)
Metropolis	100% (1,000 gp)	10 + 10 per 10%	140% (DC 50; 1,400 gp)

THE LIFE OF A PIRATE

the PCs Infamy, but that alone isn't the goal. At the most basic level, infamous pirates have the potential to press-gang unfortunates into their crews, get repairs to their ships in nearly any port, and win discounts from merchants they'd prefer not to rob. As a crew becomes more and more infamous, however, its legend stretches across the seas, allowing it to garner support from other pirate lords, win more favorable vessels, and even rally whole pirate armadas under its flag. This system allows characters to track how their legend is growing over the course of the campaign, along with providing them tangible rewards for building appropriately piratical reputations.

Infamy and Disrepute Scores: In a method similar to the tracking system for Fame and Prestige Points detailed in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Pathfinder Society Field Guide*, a party has two related scores, Infamy and Disrepute. Infamy tracks how many points of Infamy the crew has gained over its career—think of this as the sum of all the outlandish stories and rumors about the PCs being told throughout the Shackles. Infamy rarely, if ever, decreases, and reaching certain Infamy thresholds provides useful benefits and allows others to be purchased using points of Disrepute. Infamy is limited by actual skill, however, and a group's Infamy score can never be more than $4 \times$ the PCs' average party level.

Disrepute is a spendable resource—a group's actual ability to cash in on its reputation. This currency is used to purchase impositions, deeds others might not want to do for the group, but that they perform either to curry the group's favor or to avoid its disfavor. This score will likely fluctuate over the course of a pirate crew's career and can go as high as the group's Infamy (but never higher), and at times might even drop to zero. This isn't something to worry about, though, as a low Disrepute score has no bearing on a crew's overall reputation—on the contrary, it merely means they're making use of the benefits their status has won them. However, it does represent that even the PCs' legend can only take them so far, and if a group's Disrepute drops lower than the Disrepute price of a benefit, the crew must spend time building its Disrepute back up before it can purchase that benefit.

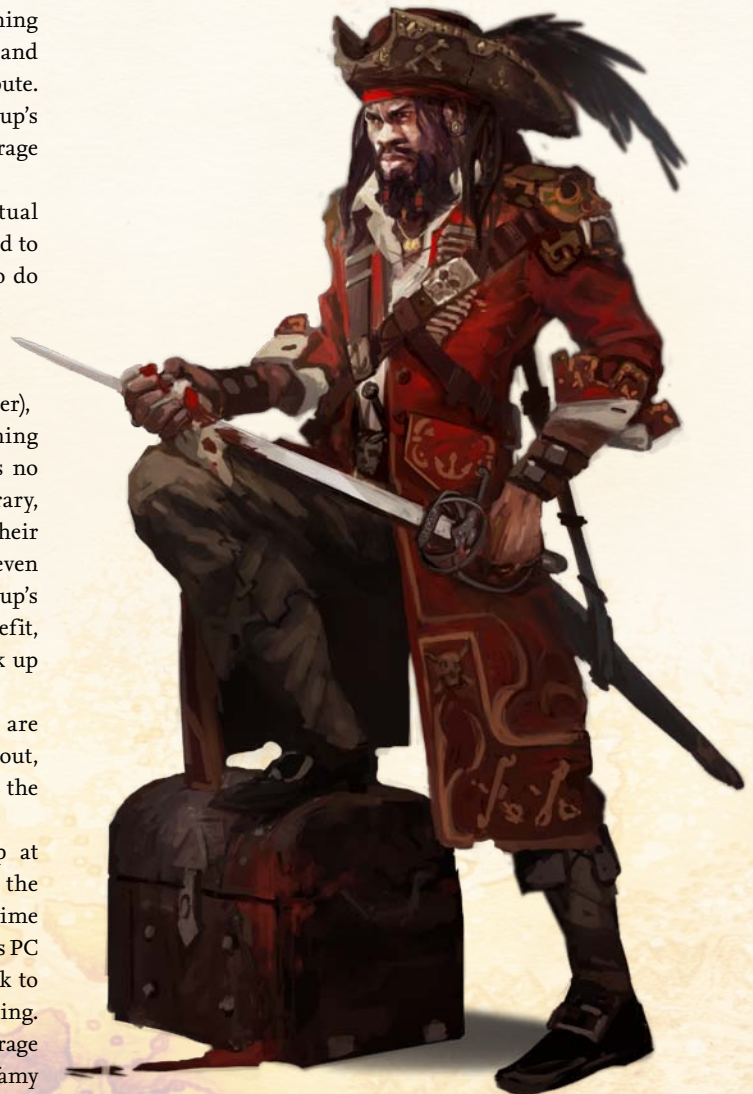
Winning Infamy and Disrepute: A few things are required to gain Infamy: an audience, a deed to tell about, and a flair for storytelling. Proof of the group's deed in the form of plunder doesn't hurt either.

To gain Infamy, the PCs must moor their ship at a port for 1 full day, and the PC determined by the group to be its main storyteller must spend this time on shore carousing and boasting of infamous deeds. This PC must make either a Bluff, Intimidate, or Perform check to gauge the effectiveness of her recounting or embellishing. The DC of this check is equal to $15 +$ twice the group's average party level (APL), and the check is referred to as an Infamy

check. If the character succeeds at this check, the group's Infamy and Disrepute both increase by +1 (so long as neither score is already at its maximum amount). If the result exceeds the DC by +5, the group's Infamy and Disrepute increase by +2; if the result exceeds the DC by +10, both scores increase by +3. The most a party's Infamy and Disrepute scores can ever increase as a result of a single Infamy check is by 3 points. If the PC fails the Infamy check, there is no change in her group's Infamy score and the day has been wasted.

Occasionally, deeds of exceptional daring or depravity might win a party increases to its Disrepute. This sort of discretionary bonus to Disrepute is noted in the context of an adventure or determined by the GM.

Infamy and Disrepute per Port: No matter how impressionable (or drunk) the crowd, no one wants to hear the same tales and boasts over and over again. Thus, a group can only gain a maximum of 5 points of Infamy and Disrepute from any particular port. However, this amount





RUM RATION

Aboard many ships, half a pint of rum is distributed to each crew member at dusk. The rum is staggeringly strong, and is often watered down to make grog. Characters drinking the ration are affected as though they had taken an addictive drug (see page 236 of the *GameMastery Guide* for details on drugs and addiction). The rum ration is doled out more to keep the crew sated and docile than for recreation. The penalty for selling or spilling the ration is six lashes, or six lashes from a cat-o'-nine-tails for a second offense. Deliberately tipping away rum on board a crowded ship without being seen requires a DC 10 Stealth check. While on merchant or navy vessels rum rations are strictly limited, on pirate ships, crew members can often request more rum if they please.

SHACKLES RUM RATION

Type ingested; **Addiction** minor, Fortitude DC 5

Price 2 sp

Effect variable; +1d4 alchemical bonus to Charisma and fatigued for 1d8 hours

Damage 1d3 Con

resets every time a group reaches a new Infamy threshold. Thus, once a group gains 5 points of Infamy and Disrepute in Quent, it can gain no further points of Infamy from that port until it reaches the next Infamy threshold, though the crew can travel to another port and gain more Infamy by boasting to a new audience.

Plunder and Infamy: Plunder can modify a PC's attempt to gain Infamy in two ways. Before making an Infamy check for the day, the party can choose to spend plunder to influence the result—any tale is more believable when it comes from someone throwing around her wealth and buying drinks for the listeners. Every point of plunder expended adds a +2 bonus to the character's skill check to earn Infamy. The party can choose to spend as much plunder as it wants to influence this check—even the most leaden-tongued pirate might win fabulous renown by spending enough booty.

Additionally, if a PC fails an Infamy check, the party can choose to spend 3 points of plunder to immediately reroll the check. The party may only make one reroll attempt per day, and spend the plunder even if the second attempt fails—some people just aren't impressed no matter how much loot you throw at them.

Spending Disrepute: A group's Disrepute can be spent to buy beneficial effects called impositions, though some impositions might only be available in certain places—such as at port—or might have additional costs—like forcing a prisoner to walk the plank. Spending Disrepute

to purchase an imposition requires 1 full day unless otherwise noted. When Disrepute is spent, the group's Disrepute score decreases by the price of the imposition, but its Infamy (and, thus, the group's Infamy threshold) remains the same. The prices of impositions and the Infamy threshold required to make those impositions available are detailed below.

INFAMY THRESHOLD

The following benefits are available to groups that achieve the listed amount of Infamy.

Title & Infamy Required	Benefit
Disgraceful (10+ Infamy)	Characters may purchase disgraceful impositions. The PCs may choose one favored port. They gain a +2 bonus on all Infamy checks made at that port.
Despicable (20+ Infamy)	Characters may purchase despicable impositions. Once per week, the PCs can sacrifice a prisoner or crew member to immediately gain 1d3 points of Disrepute. This sacrifice is always fatal, and returning the victim to life results in the loss of 1d6 points of Disrepute.
Notorious (30+ Infamy)	Characters may purchase notorious impositions. Disgraceful impositions can be purchased for half price (rounded down). The PCs may choose a second favored port. They gain a +2 bonus on all Infamy checks made at this new favored port and a +4 bonus on Infamy checks made at their first favored port.
Loathsome (40+ Infamy)	Characters may purchase loathsome impositions. Despicable impositions can be purchased for half price (rounded down). PCs gain a +5 bonus on skill checks made to sell plunder.
Vile (55+ Infamy)	Characters may purchase vile impositions. Notorious impositions can be purchased for half price (rounded down). Disgraceful impositions are free. The PCs may choose a third favored port. They gain a +2 bonus on all Infamy checks made at the new favored port, a +4 bonus on Infamy checks made at their second favored port, and a +6 bonus on Infamy checks made at their first favored port.

THE LIFE OF A PIRATE

IMPOSITIONS

The following benefits can be purchased by groups that spend the listed amount of Disrepute and have achieved the requisite amount of Infamy. Over the course of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, characters might find other ways to spend their Disrepute. GMs are also encouraged to create their own impositions using the following as guidelines.

Infamy Cost Imposition Benefit

Disgraceful Impositions

2	<i>Yes, Sir!:</i> For the next hour, the PCs' crew completes any mundane tasks they're assigned in half the expected time. This typically relates to Craft and Profession (sailor) checks made to prepare, maintain, or repair the ship, and cannot be applied to combat or more complex deeds like crafting magic items.
5	<i>Captain's Orders!:</i> As a standard action, a PC on board her ship can cast <i>fog cloud</i> , <i>heroism</i> , <i>make whole</i> , <i>quench</i> , or <i>whispering wind</i> with a caster level equal to her character level.
5	<i>Walk the Plank!:</i> The PCs may sacrifice one crew member or prisoner to grant themselves and their crew one of two bonuses: either a +2 bonus on all skill checks or a +2 bonus on attack rolls. These bonuses only apply while on board the PCs' ship and last until either the next day or when the captain leaves the ship. If a sacrificed character is returned to life, the PCs and their crew members take a –2 penalty on both skill checks and attack rolls for 1 day.
10	<i>Get Up, You Dogs!:</i> Every PC and allied character on the deck of the PCs' ship is affected as per the spell <i>cure light wounds</i> , as if cast by a cleric of the PCs' average party level. This imposition can only be used once per week.

Despicable Impositions

5	<i>Lashings!:</i> The speed of the PCs' ship doubles for 1 day.
5	<i>Shiver Me Timbers!:</i> While on board their ship, the PCs and their entire crew can reroll initiative or roll initiative in what would otherwise be a surprise round. The benefit of this imposition can be used immediately, but only once per week.
10	<i>Besmara's Blessings!:</i> As a standard action, a PC on board her ship can cast <i>animate rope</i> , <i>control water</i> , <i>remove curse</i> , <i>remove disease</i> , or <i>water breathing</i> with a caster level equal to her character level.
10	<i>Dead Men Tell No Tales!:</i> While on board their ship, the PCs can use this imposition to automatically confirm a threatened critical hit.

Notorious Impositions

5	<i>You'll Take It!:</i> The PCs can spend up to 5 points of plunder in 1 day at 50% of its value (regardless of a community's maximum sale %). This amount cannot be adjusted by skill checks.
5	<i>Honor the Code!:</i> The PCs and their crew gain a +4 bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks made against other pirates for the next 24 hours.
10	<i>Master the Winds!:</i> As a standard action, a PC on board her ship can cast <i>call lightning storm</i> , <i>control winds</i> , <i>mirage arcana</i> , or <i>telekinesis</i> with a caster level equal to her character level.
15	<i>Chum the Waters!:</i> For every Infamy threshold they possess, the PCs summon 1d4 sharks into the waters surrounding their ship. These sharks are not under the PCs' control and viciously attack any creature in the water.

Loathsome Impositions

5	<i>Evade!:</i> Teleport your ship 100 feet in any direction. This imposition can be used once per day.
10	<i>You'll Take It and Like It!:</i> The PCs can spend up to 5 points of plunder in 1 day at 100% of its value (regardless of a community's maximum sale %). This amount cannot be adjusted by skill checks.
10	<i>Master the Waves!:</i> As a standard action, a PC on board her ship can cast <i>control weather</i> , <i>discern location</i> , <i>hero's feast</i> , or <i>waves of exhaustion</i> with a caster level equal to her character level.
20	<i>The Widow's Scar!:</i> Choose one enemy to curse. You and your crew gain a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls against that NPC for 1 week. The enemy is aware of the curse and who cursed her, and can end the effect with a <i>remove curse</i> spell.

Vile Impositions

10	<i>More Lashings!:</i> The speed of the PCs' ship quadruples for 1 day.
15	<i>The Hungry Sea!:</i> A PC aboard her ship may cast <i>elemental swarm</i> , <i>storm of vengeance</i> , or <i>whirlwind</i> as an 17th-level caster.
20	<i>Dive! Dive! Dive!:</i> The PCs' ship submerges and can travel underwater at its normal speed for up to 1 hour. During this time, the vessel is encompassed by a bubble of breathable air and takes no ill effects from the water—even most sea creatures keep their distance. The ship leaves no visible wake upon the waters above, but might be visible in particularly clear water.
25	<i>Summon the Serpent!:</i> One sea serpent comes to the aid of the PCs' ship. This sea monster is under the control of the PCs and serves for 10 minutes before disappearing back into the deep.



ROLES ABOARD A PIRATE SHIP

A pirate crew is more than just a mob of cutthroats on a ship; all crew members have specific roles and responsibilities, with harsh punishments being meted out upon those who shirk their duties. Listed here are some of the standard roles aboard a typical pirate ship. Not all of these roles might be represented on every vessel, but such details can help players understand their characters' daily duties.

Boatswain: The boatswain, or bosun (pronounced "bosun" either way), is responsible for the upper deck of the vessel and above. This makes the boatswain accountable for all rope, rigging, anchors, and sails. At the start of the day, the boatswain and those under her weigh anchor, raise the sails and report on the general condition of the ship's deck to the captain. As she oversees many of the ship's basic daily labors, the boatswain is often responsible for keeping discipline and dispensing punishment.

Cabin Boy/Girl: Servant to the captain and other officers, this low-ranking and typically young crew member assists other sailors in their duties and runs various errands across the ship, requiring him or her to gain a measure of understanding of almost all the ship's roles.

Captain: The ultimate authority on any ship, his word is law to all on board. The captain chooses where to sail, what to plunder, and who fills the other stations aboard the vessel, among many other command decisions. Leadership often proves perilous, however, as a captain is, above all, meant to secure success for his ship and crew. Failing to do so increases the threat of mutiny.

Carpenter/Surgeon: No matter what enchantments or alchemical unguents augment a pirate ship, its heart and bones are still wood. This simple fact makes the carpenter one of the most important positions aboard any vessel. Carpenters are chiefly responsible for maintaining the ship below the deck, finding and plugging leaks, repairing damage, and replacing masts and yards. As the crew member most skilled with the saw, the carpenter typically serves as a ship's surgeon as well—bones cut just as easily as timbers.

Cook: While the quartermaster normally allocates the rations, the cook and his apprentices make and distribute meals to the crew. Although some better-outfitted vessels employ skilled cooks to attend to the captain and the officers, many cooks are drawn from crew members who have suffered crippling injuries, allowing them to still serve even after such trauma.

Master-at-Arms: Concerned with the security of the ship, the fitness of the crew, and the dispensing of justice, the master-at-arms typically is one of the most feared and dreaded of a ship's officers.

Master Gunner: The master gunner is in charge of all shipboard artillery, ensuring moisture and rust don't ruin the weapons and that the crew knows how to use them. On

board ships with firearms, the master gunner maintains the vessel's cannons, firearms, and powder supplies; on ships without such weapons, she maintains the ballistas, catapults, and so on.

Quartermaster: The quartermaster oversees the supplies and items stored aboard the ship. She maintains the supplies of food and weaponry, oversees the disbursement of food to the cook, and doles out the rum ration to the crew.

Rigger: Riggers work the rigging and unfurl the sails. In battle, next to that of a boarding party, the riggers' job is one of the most dangerous, as they pull enemy vessels near enough to board.

Swab: Any sailor who mops the decks. Also used as slang for any low-ranking or unskilled crew member.

PIRATICAL PUNISHMENTS

To maintain the obedience and effectiveness of their crews, most captains enforce strict schedules and shipboard laws upon their vessels, all maintained by the swift dispensation of brutal punishments. The following presents (in order of severity) the game effects of a variety of typical nautical punishments, which the PCs have the potential to face or inflict during their piratical careers. Most of these sentences are meted out just before the evening meal, at an event typically referred to as the bloody hour. Victims are tied to the whipping post on the main deck and their backs stripped for punishment—with penalties doubled for those who resist. Although the victim is bound, the punishers simply lash their victims, and are not allowed a full-round action to make a coup-de-grace. A roll of 1 on such an attack is treated as a non-damaging fumble that still counts as a strike, much to the amusement of the crew.

Rope Bash: Little more than an admonishment—and occasionally used as a sign of endearment—a rope bash is a single attack with the hefty, sealed end of a ship's rope that delivers 1 point of nonlethal damage.

The Lash: This is an attack using a whip. Damage dealt by the lash during bloody hour is typically nonlethal.

Cat-o'-Nine-Tails: This is an attack using a cat-o'-nine-tails, also referred to simply as a cat—a Medium version of which deals 1d4 points of slashing damage on a successful hit. See page 18 of *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea* for more details on this weapon.

Confined in the Sweatbox: A cramped metal box left on deck and exposed to the sun, a sweatbox is terribly confining and replicates unbearably hot conditions. Each hour a character spends in the box, she must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. The DC of this save increases by +1 for each consecutive hour the character spends in the box. Any creature with fire resistance is immune to the effects of the sweatbox. Victims typically spend 8, 12 or even 24 hours locked up in the sweatbox.

THE LIFE OF A PIRATE

Keelhauling: The most frightful of pirate punishments is keelhauling, as it generally ends in death—often by decapitation. Being keelhauled involves being tied to a rope looped over a ship's keel and dragged down one side of a ship, underwater across the barnacle encrusted hull, and up the other side. Keelhauling takes several rounds and can be done either fast or slow. If done fast, the barnacles cut deep and flense the victim, dealing 1d6 points of damage per round. If done slow, shallower cuts are incurred, dealing 1d3 damage per round, but the risk of drowning increases (see page 445 of the *Core Rulebook*). In either case, the victim can make a DC 20 Reflex save each round to take half damage. How long keelhauling takes typically depends on the vessel, with a keelhauling on a ship like the *Wormwood* taking 6 rounds if done fast and 12 rounds if done slow.

PIRATE ENTERTAINMENTS

With time on their hands and precious few places to go, Shackles pirates have come up with an astonishing array of pastimes.

One way pirates amuse themselves is through songs and stories. Pirates love a good sea chantey, and characters with Perform skills quickly find themselves popular members of the crew (although pirates aren't generally big on Chelish Opera). If a character succeeds at a DC 20 Perform check, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks made to interact with any listener among the crew for the next 24 hours. A Perform result of 9 or lower, however, indicates that the next time he attempts to use Perform to entertain the crew, everyone ignores him unless he makes a successful DC 15 Bluff or Intimidate check before doing so.

Aside from telling stories, singing songs, and other recreations (all of which might be simulated with the Perform skill), these pastimes have two things in common: they are dangerous, and they are played for money. When betting on any of the following games, the minimum bet is 1 gp, and the maximum ready cash any NPC in the lesser crew is likely to have is 20 gp. Some people are bad losers—the ramifications of this are left for the GM to decide.

Arm Wrestling: Not merely typical arm wrestling bouts, such matches are usually conducted on a barrel top covered in broken glass, knives, or caltrops. Participants make opposed Strength checks, with the higher result determining the winner, and the loser taking an amount of damage equal to 1d2 + the winner's Strength modifier as his hand and arm are pushed onto whatever lies on the table.

Hog Lob: Participants lob a lead ingot covered in a greased piglet skin, the "hog," as far across the deck as possible. This game is resolved by d20 checks between any number of players, who agree on a bet beforehand. The hog counts as an improvised weapon, imposing a -4 penalty on all rolls using it unless the thrower has the Throw

Anything feat. Checks are resolved as attack rolls using the character's CMB. Characters toss the hog a number of feet equal to their adjusted rolls; for example, a character who gets a result of 22 throws the hog 22 feet. Some pirates claim to have participated in games played against Asmodeus using a live hog.

Heave: This potentially deadly drinking game is played with rum and takes place between any number of pirates, who bet to predict the winner beforehand. Each pirate drinks a half pint of rum in one swig. Doing so forces participants to make a successful DC 15 Fortitude save or have the damage dealt by the rum ration increase by +1 (see sidebar; this is in addition to the normal effects of the rum ration). This DC increases by +3 for each consecutive drink. Pirates then take turns drinking until only one is left standing. Some tales tell of entire crews drinking themselves to death through this game, leaving ships of drunk ghosts wandering the shipping routes.





BESMARA

Besmara (bes-MAR-uh) is the goddess of pirates and sea monsters. She is brash, lusty, confrontational, and greedy, but follows a code of honor and is loyal to her crew and allies as long as it serves her interests. She cares little for senseless murder or other unprofitable acts, but is willing to take risks to attain great prizes. Even the most irreligious pirate captain throws a share of treasure overboard now and then as tribute for the Pirate Queen. Mayors of port cities and captains of merchant vessels curse her name, for her followers are a direct threat to legitimate trade. She has little power or interest in the mortal world beyond the sea and its immediate reach.

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Originally Besmara was a powerful water spirit with an affinity for manipulating sea monsters. She gained fame among primitive tribes for her willingness to drive these creatures toward rival coastal villages; later, when tribes began boat-raids on other settlements, they found she could be bribed to fend off these attacks with her monsters or arrange for predation-free sailing for the aggressors. With this long history of playing both sides, she leveraged power for herself by destroying and consuming rival spirits of wood, gold, and battle, and eventually became a minor goddess of piracy, sea monsters, and strife. She is comfortable with her current level of power and notoriety, and knows she cannot unseat a major deity such as Abadar or Gorum (though if she had an opportunity at such a prize she just might take it), so she entertains herself by raiding the outposts of celestials, fiends, and minor deities.

Besmara's existence as a deity predates the Age of Enthronement by several centuries, and as a spirit millennia before that. Her power as a goddess has waxed and waned in response to the naval power of coastal empires, but even when at her most vulnerable she has found ways to escape capture or destruction. She doesn't care about good and evil, only pursuit, battle, and reward. She grants spells to righteous privateers battling the Chelish navy and to murderous buccaneers who give no quarter to defeated opponents—much like the war god Gorum, her interest is in the conflict, not the consequences of its resolution. She enjoys strife more than peace, as when two nations squabble she has more opportunities to plunder both sides and blame her attacks on the victim's rival; her followers have been known to stir up trouble by sailing aggressively (or even attacking) while using a temperamental nation's colors or falsely claiming to be "legitimate privateers" as they attack in peacetime.

In her interactions with sea monsters, she doesn't play the motherly, brood-creating role that Lamashtu does, but rather the clever bully who keeps other bullies in line through physical threats and force of personality—her monsters are like vicious dogs who reluctantly obey her command to heel only because she can hurt or kill them, rather than loyal beasts who comply out of respect, love, or devotion. She has few priests, for pirates are more superstitious than religious, but she counts among her followers anyone who has made a desperate prayer to her

when facing death on the sea or given tribute to gain her favor. Aquatic races usually venerate their own gods and avoid attracting her attention, for her monsters prey under the sea as well as upon it.

Besmara has a buccaneer's heart and mind. She gives chase if she wants something, or lets her prey escape for a time if she wants the challenge of giving it a head start. She retreats from a superior force if she doesn't think she can win, but doesn't believe fights have to be fair. She is loyal to an ally as long as that alliance serves her interests, and thinks nothing of betraying someone who is no longer useful to her, teaming up with an old enemy for a common purpose, or fighting against a former ally. Her personal code of conduct is simple and straightforward, and most pirates follow something similar, even if they don't worship her as their patron. She hates anyone who tries to restrain her, her



"CARVE YOUR NAME ON THE EVER-CHANGING SEA WITH A SABER OF TERROR AND TRIUMPH. FIGHT FOR PLUNDER, FAME, AND GLORY, AND EARN YOUR PLACE AMONG THE LEGENDS OF THE SEA."

—BESMARA'S CODE

activities, or piracy in general, putting her in opposition to blockade fleets and most countries' navies. Though she is quite competent at winning battles involving only a few ships, pirates rarely command entire fleets, and she makes no claims of being a war deity.

It is common practice for pirates to throw a treasure chest or two overboard before a risky battle as tribute to the goddess, though this is never a guarantee of her favor. Isolated caches of this tribute litter the sea floor, left alone by aquatic races (who understand to whom it belongs) and usually guarded by strange creatures of the deep sea sent by the goddess or her agents. Such creatures usually have no interest in these treasures, but watch over them because the loot attracts tasty surface-dwellers, and because serving the Pirate Queen in this way means she is less likely to find another, more dangerous task for them. The greatest of these sites contain sunken ships, either deliberately sunk by wary pirates or lost because of great battles, whose crews have transformed into draugr (*Bestiary* 2 110). If these caches are ever stolen, the goddess's reaction ranges anywhere from sending a scourge of sea beasts after them, to cursing the responsible party to drown at sea, to allowing the looter to retire in luxury—all depending on the thief's reputation, her mood, and any sentimental value she may have for the lost treasure.

Nearly all of Besmara's followers are pirates or pirates by any other name. The rest are folks who profit from strife (such as war profiteers, dog fighters, and similar



low-class folk), officials in “pirate towns,” a few intelligent sea monsters, pirates’ spouses, and prostitutes whose clientele comprises mainly pirates. Even such strumpets, harlots, trollops, and rent boys who rarely or never set foot on pirate ships indirectly profit from successful piracy, and pray to Besmara that their favorite buccaneers return with lust in their hearts and many coins to spend. Some of these consider themselves “sacred prostitutes” of the goddess, though this devotion often consists of little more than a “pirate queen” costume and roleplayed seduction (the goddess herself laughs at these mortal antics). Male prostitutes among the faithful are often referred to as *matelots* (a term also sometimes given to the male spouse of a pirate).

Besmara appears as a brash, raven-haired pirate captain of any race she pleases, dressed in a stereotypical costume—typically colored pantaloons, black boots, a blousy shirt, and a hat (a bicorne, tricorne, or bandana), with gaudy jewelry and perhaps an eye patch, and carrying a rapier, saber, or cutlass. Sometimes her skin is greenish or even bluish, and she may sport one or more scars on her face and neck, either from a blade or the suckers and beak of a great squid. She may have slow-burning matches braided into her hair, or breathe wisps of blue-green fire that ignite nearby combustibles. Despite her inhuman origins, she does not take monstrous form, even when angered, though swarms of crabs, predatory fish, and tentacled monsters have crawled out of her clothing, nearby water, or even thin air to do her bidding. Those who oppose her on the water feel seasick; those who oppose her on land feel hung over.

Besmara intervenes in the form of gold coins spinning, seabirds flying in odd patterns, mists concealing one’s approach from enemies, enemies dropping weapons or having their weapons misfire, and opposing ships’ sails tearing or burning. She shows her anger through stored food spoiling in a matter of moments, potable water turning to sludge, peg-legs splintering and hooks growing burrs against the wearers’ stumps, dead seabirds falling from the sky, sudden growths of barnacles on hulls, the wetting of black powder, the tearing of sails, foul-smelling winds, and an increased presence of sea monsters.

Besmara is chaotic neutral and her portfolio is piracy, sea monsters, and strife. Her favored weapon is the rapier. Her holy symbol in most seas is a skull and crossbones on a black or red field, though Ulfen pirates often use a viking helm with crossed swords behind it instead of the design familiar in southern waters. Her domains are Chaos, Trickery, War, Water, and Weather. Nearly all of Besmara’s priests are clerics or rangers, with a few bards and druids, and every few decades an antipaladin champions her more destructive aspects. Her most common title is the Pirate Queen, though she is also known regionally as the Black Lady, the Sea Banshee, and Sailor’s Doom.

Rather than having a defined deific domain, Besmara wanders the chaos of the Maelstrom aboard her idealized pirate ship, the *Seawraith*. While depictions of her vessel vary with the source, reflecting the observer’s cultural notion of a warship—everything from a galleon to a longship to a junk—the *Seawraith* uniformly inspires fear and respect. She can change its appearance or configuration at will, as well as the environment around and within it, just as any deity in its home realm. However, this power only extends about a hundred yards from the ship itself, requiring her to use conventional methods of battle when she raids planar outposts. Fortunately, the ship’s mobility and her chaotic powers make it very difficult to find should she wish to be hidden, and several vengeful divine entities have sought her in the Maelstrom for centuries, only to give up in frustration. Sometimes Besmara leads an armada of petitioner-crewed ships, or drags floating wreckage, loot, and crazed, undying sailors in her ship’s wake, or even the *Kelpie’s Wrath*, her herald. The *Seawraith* is also a constellation in Golarion’s sky.

Besmara’s followers are greedy folk. While some take to the seas in search of adventure or the joy of exploration, most people with that mindset gravitate to more benign deities, leaving those who lust for gold above all things as the predominant members of her flock. Such followers covet the belongings of others—whether actual riches, property, titles, fame, or lovers. If someone has something they want, they think it’s fair to take it. Most are chaotic and love their personal freedoms, avoiding tyrants who prey on the weak not because they disagree with this philosophy, but because they don’t like someone else telling them what to do. Her followers hate staying in place from day to day, and are usually content with a few days in town to carouse before returning to a ship and heading out again. The Pirate Queen’s followers have many superstitions about good luck (cats, figureheads with open eyes, pouring alcohol on a deck), bad luck (whistling on deck), and evil spirits (wearing gold jewelry wards them off) in addition to other pirate traditions and beliefs.

There are no formalized rituals common to all churches, but services are generally upbeat, with singing, boot-stomping, dancing, and the lighting of incense or matches (particularly slow-burning matches and fuses). Burials are one of the few somber occasions, marked by a short prayer and either burial at sea (weighted down with a chain, cannonball, or a heavy but inexpensive treasure) or burning a rowboat or raft bearing the corpse. Most priests consider it undignified to abandon fallen allies to be eaten by a sea monster unless doing so would save other crew members from an early death (such as giving sharks dead bodies to eat so living crew members can safely escape a sinking wreck).

As is befitting a chaotic pirate goddess, the church has no official stance on marriage, breeding, or raising

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children. Some pirates never marry, some have many spouses, some have children, and some choose to acknowledge or train them. Very few in the faith embrace celibacy, save those with an obvious disfiguring condition or venereal affliction.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Given the small numbers of Besmara's priesthood, there are few with the time and interest to build temples to her. Most of her temples are repurposed buildings or shipwrecked hulls, some of which are half-submerged. A public temple always displays a jolly roger flag, and—much like a thieves' guild providing services—its priest sells healing, local nautical charts, and hideout tips, or fences goods. In places where piracy is frowned upon, the temple has a public purpose (such as selling rope or barrels), and knowledge of its true nature is shared among pirates by word of mouth.

Far more common than temples are shrines to the goddess. In port towns, these shrines may be little nooks between buildings with a pirate flag and a carving of Besmara's face or an old ship's figurehead, a carved mast jutting from a pier, or a whittled idol of a woman holding a cup. These shrines usually have a place to hold a stick of incense or a match, or a place to pour a cupful of rum or grog. The shrines with cups are designed so that when the visitor pours the drink into the cup, it trickles out of a hole in the bottom or through a channel in the figurine's arm so it appears the goddess is drinking the offered beverage. A priest living on a ship usually owns a portable shrine that doubles as an altar, and may store it in her quarters or display it on the deck where suddenly pious pirates can mutter a prayer mid-battle.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

There is essentially no hierarchy within the church—each priest crafts his or her own title and recognizes no authority other than the goddess. Priests do not report to anyone, though they may defer to a mentor's decision if there is no compelling reason not to do so. Rarely does a particular ship have more than one priest on board, and even then they may be rivals. Every few years, a charismatic priest-captain may unite other like-minded priests under his or her banner, creating an armada with the leading priest as the admiral, but this is an exception. Most priests consider themselves entirely independent of each other.

Most priests are practical folk rather than zealots, using their magic to gain strength on the water. This is not to say that a typical priest's belief isn't sincere, but there is a marked difference between the crazed devotion of a Lamashtan cleric or noble serenity of an Iomedean paladin and the utilitarian faith of a Besmaran priest. As long as the goddess is respected and gets her fair share of tribute, she is content with little





CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Besmara's priests can use *summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

Summon Monster II

Reefclaw* (*Bestiary* 2 234) (CN)

Summon Monster/Nature's Ally V

Saltwater merrow (*Bestiary* 2 189) (NE)

Summon Monster/Nature's Ally VI

Tylosaurus (*Bestiary* 2 91) (N)

* This creature has the entropic simple template (*Bestiary* 2 292).

BESMARAN FAMILIARS

A cleric of Besmara may give up one domain in exchange for a bird, blue-ringed octopus (*Ultimate Magic* 117), king crab (*Ultimate Magic* 119), monkey, or any of the familiars presented in the *Core Rulebook*. The cleric uses her cleric level as her effective wizard level for this purpose. A ranger who worships Besmara may select any of the creatures listed above as a familiar instead of choosing an animal companion. The ranger's effective wizard level for this ability is equal to his ranger level – 3.

more than lip service, and her priests know this. By using her magic to gain wealth, power, and fame, they serve her interests and demonstrate her greatness.

Like lay worshippers, Besmara's priests are either pirates or folk whose business directly relies on piracy. Their personalities run the gamut from dashing privateers to rapacious murderers, and some in the middle may play both roles as the mood or pay suits them. They bless pirates and ships, heal crews, act as go-betweens for those looking for work or workers, guard pirate ships, chase off or bind sea monsters, and always try to profit from their activities. They consider the tithe-based survival of religious monks and priests to be incredibly humiliating and would rather accept a common share swabbing a deck than take a handout from someone else. They work until they've earned enough gold to retire, and go back to work if they spend it all before they die.

Priests of Besmara are usually skilled at Heal and Profession (sailor). Most have ranks in Acrobatics, Appraise, and Intimidate. Canny ones also have ranks in Diplomacy, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), and Knowledge (nature). Priests don't

have any set routine, though most follow the normal cycle of activity on ship. Daily prayers are short and to the point.

HOLY TEXT

The Pirate Queen's holy text is *Besmara's Code*, just a few pages detailing treatment of crew, treasure, and captives. Most priests who can read make copies in their own hand; those who cannot read memorize the text's key points and ignore what doesn't concern them.

APHORISMS

These three phrases are the core of the goddess's code, and any person familiar with her faith should recognize them and understand what they mean.

End Your Quarrels on Shore: Whatever disagreements one sailor has with another, onboard a ship is not the place to settle them, for everyone's survival depends on the crew working together. If one member of the crew has a disagreement with another, the place to settle it is on shore—whether this is a port or just a sandy beach.

Thirty Stripes Lacking One: The traditional punishment for a serious infraction on the ship is thirty lashes on the bare back. The captain or boatswain, however, may choose to reserve the last (30th) lash as an act of mercy if the target is repentant or unconscious. Still, the captain always has the option to make that last strike at any time—a threat to ensure better behavior from the target. Usually this “lash debt” is canceled once the ship makes port, and always if the target leaves the crew.

Truce Ends at the Horizon: While pirates recognize the need for parley, any truce is only valid until the opposing ship is past the horizon. This gives the weaker captain a head start should he fear the other captain's intentions. Breaking this part of the code is seen as not only unsportsmanlike, but a threat to all pirates.

HOLIDAYS

The church of the Pirate Queen has no official holidays. Her old role as a master of sea monsters (many of which have seasonal hunting grounds) means that in Garundi lands her faith is remembered more at certain seasonal events. Thus, some tribes may associate her with the return of reefclaws in the summer or the ebbing of sahuagin attacks at the start of winter. Besmara has grown beyond that role, however, and doesn't care about the old rituals as long as she is respected.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Besmara is a thorn in the side of many lawful powers and a casual ally or enemy of just about everyone else. Like her followers, she interacts peacefully when it suits her, but may betray an ally when it is convenient or profitable. She has been known to associate with Cayden Cailean (who considers her dangerously attractive), Gorum (who treats her like

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an untrustworthy mercenary captain), and Gozreh (who calls her sister, lover, monster-tamer, or all of the above). Erastil loathes Besmara because she is a threat to families and doesn't adhere to his idea of a woman's role, Iomedae dislikes her because the Pirate Queen has a corrupt sense of honor, Abadar abhors her because she is a disruption to naval trade, and Asmodeus despises her because she has no sense of order, dares interfere with his plans, and is a female who disrespects him. Because her home is in the Maelstrom, she has frequent interactions with protean cabals and their mysterious lords, but has bargained and bribed them into accepting her presence.

NEW DIVINE SPELLS

Clerics of Besmara may prepare *lesser geas* as a 3rd-level spell and *curse of disgust* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 215) as a 5th-level spell, but can only use them to cause an aversion to boats, ships, or open bodies of water.

ADVANCED SCURVY

School necromancy [disease, evil]; **Level** cleric 1, druid 1 (Besmara)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target living creature touched

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

The subject contracts an advanced form of scurvy. He becomes constantly fatigued, suffers from bone pain (–1 penalty on Strength- and Dexterity-based checks), wounds easily (add +1 point of damage to any bleed effects affecting the target), experiences loose teeth, and is slow to heal (natural healing occurs at half the normal rate). Scurvy can be treated magically or can be overcome with proper nutrition; eating the right foods ends the fatigue and bone pain within 1–2 days and provides a full cure 2d6 days after that.

CLOUD OF SEASICKNESS

School conjuration (creation) [poison];

Level cleric 2, druid 2, sorcerer/wizard 2 (Besmara)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a piece of seaweed)

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect cloud spreads in 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** no
This spell functions like *stinking cloud*, except as noted above and that the vapors make creatures sickened instead of nauseated.

Cloud of seasickness can be made permanent with a *permanency* spell (requiring a 9th-level caster and costing 2,500 gp). A permanent *cloud of seasickness* dispersed by wind reforms in 10 minutes.

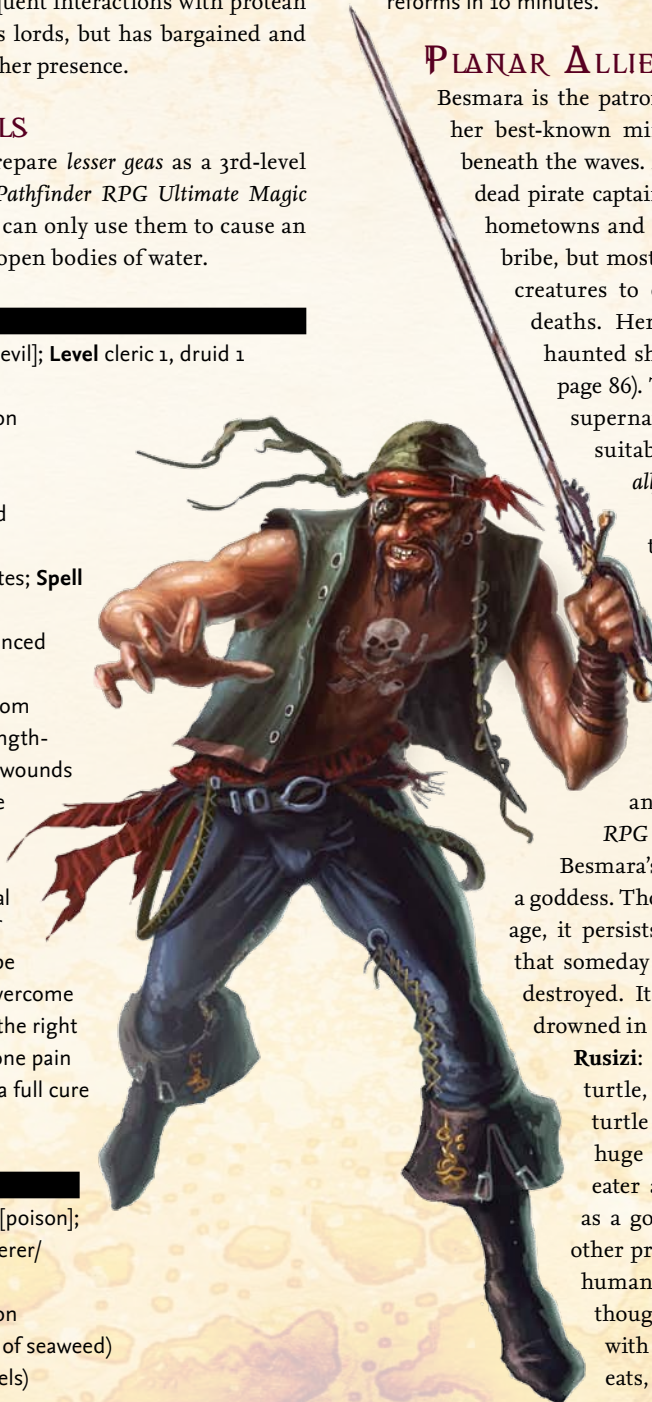
PLANAR ALLIES

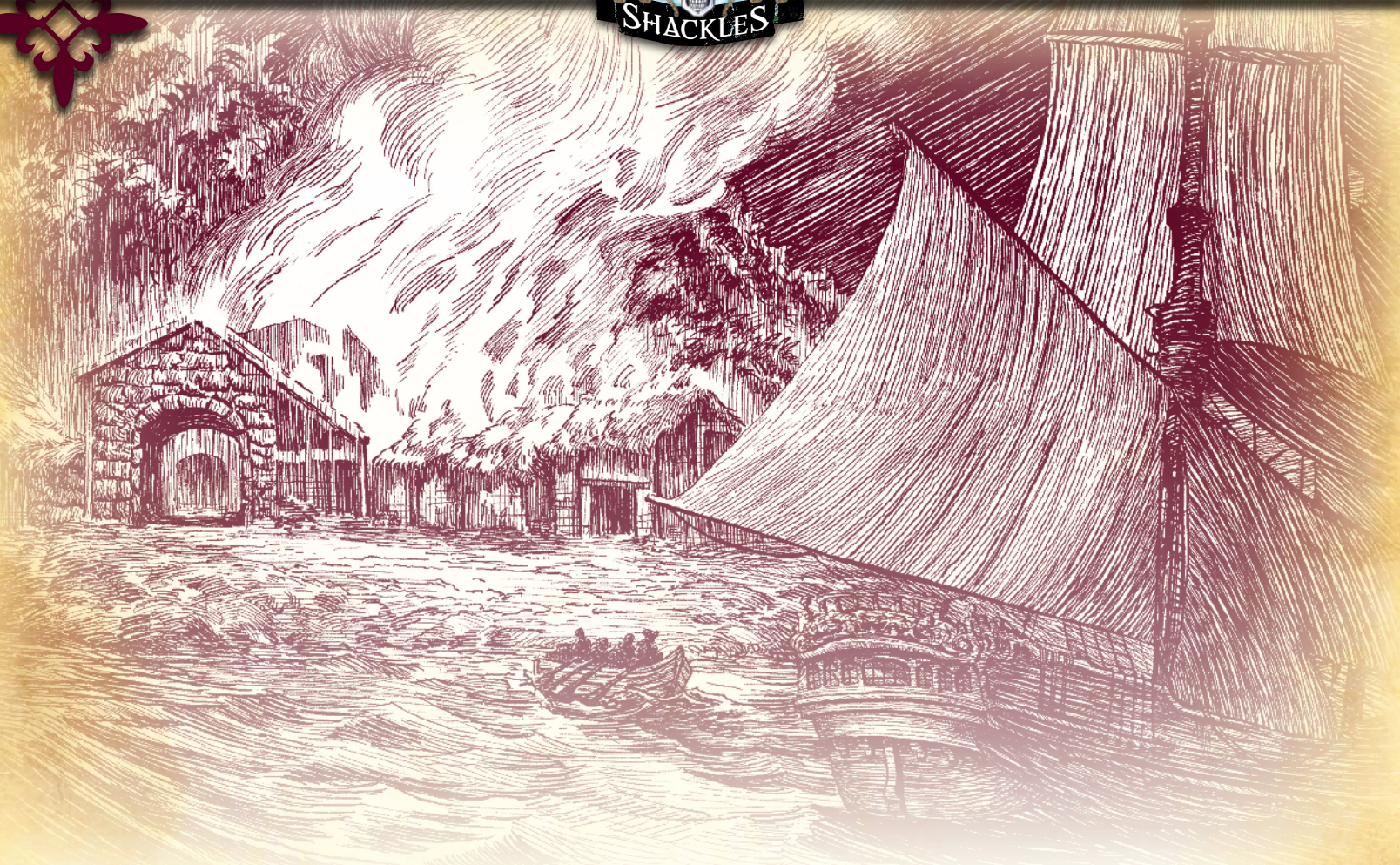
Besmara is the patron of sea monsters, and all of her best-known minions are great beasts from beneath the waves. All Besmaran priests know of dead pirate captains who are legendary in their hometowns and may call them with the right bribe, but most prefer to conjure nightmare creatures to drag enemy sailors to their deaths. Her herald is *Kelpie's Wrath*, a haunted ship that is a living being (see page 86). The following are well-known supernatural servitors of Besmara, suitable for conjuring with *planar ally* or similar spells.

Blackwarn: This tentacled thing resembles a bear-sized aquatic decapus (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 277) encrusted with barnacles. Stealthy and contrary, its preferred payments are gold, squid brains, or gnome flesh.

Old Vengeance: This ancient charybdis (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 256) has been under Besmara's thumb since before she was a goddess. Though weary and decrepit from age, it persists out of spite and the hopes that someday it will see the Pirate Queen destroyed. It loves the taste of creatures drowned in holy or unholy water.

Rusizi: Alternately described as a turtle, a crocodile, or a dragon turtle with a crocodilian head, this huge creature is a vicious man-eater and is sometimes worshiped as a god by lizardfolk, goblins, and other primitives. Long used to eating humanoid flesh, it prefers virgins, though its service can be bought with gold and adamantine (which it eats, making its shell even harder).





HELL COME ASHORE



Pathfinder's Journal: The Treasure of Far Thallai 1 of 6



As we dropped anchor, Moonplum burned. Blanketing smoke rose from the outpost's ruins. Caught by a rare westerly harmattan, it drifted out over the blue-gray waters of the Fever Sea. Warm soot fell like hail onto the *Aspidochelone's* foredeck.

Seagrave, the saltiest of my four unwilling adjutants, offered me his spyglass. Lines of grime incised his bloated face. Shells, clay beads, and bits of golden coin hung in the tangles of his beard. His night-blue greatcoat, worn in cussed defiance of the tropical heat, smelled of mutton grease, old blood, spilled rum, ordure, and the combined sweat of several decades. He wore stink as a wizard wears a warding spell.

"Looks like the *Whelk*, ma'am," he said, pronouncing the word in the sailor's manner, so that it verged on *mum*. As

fully as Siren Call had bounded his will, I could never stop Seagrave from calling me that, to say *captain* as he ought. Where once I would have corrected him, now I recognized my annoyance as small-minded. To withhold from him this tiny rebellion would be ungrateful.

"Who commands it?" I asked. No fact concerning a ship, captain, or crewman of the Shackles eluded Seagrave's mind. He absorbed the scuttlebutt of our piratical isles as a fish breathes through its gills.

"Josiah Common," answered Seagrave. "Otherwise known as Josiah Tongue-Cutter, Sy the Fork, or Tragic Joe."

"The one with the glass eye?"

"Aye, ma'am. Some say he has two glass eyes. But that's only a jest."

HELL COME ASHORE

“And to which of the pirate lords does he owe his charter?”

“Used to sail for Tessa Fairwind. These days, the Wolf.”

Seagrave meant Avimar Sorrinash, lycanthrope commander of a lycanthrope crew. My argument today was not with him.

“Does this Tragic Joe league himself with our man?”

“They ran starboard-to-port against the Rahadoumi navy, and in raids as far north as Varisia.”

The *Whelk* was a low-slung war sloop. Spiraled tiles on its prow mimicked the shell of the predatory mollusk that was its namesake. A mere handful of sailors patrolled its deck. They spyglassed us as we spyglassed them.

Seagrave licked his sun-chapped lips. “Shall we blast it with fire-spitters, or just come along and board?”

“Neither.”

He communicated his disappointment in a *basso profundo* grunt. It would have carried great weight, were he still a captain.

“If the internal peace of our free pirate nation is to be disturbed, it won’t be our doing,” I told him. “But if the Fork’s crew come at us...”

A grin surfaced from the dark sargasso of Seagrave’s beard. “Aye, ma’am.”

The crew rowed ashore in five boats—I in one, one of my adjutants in each of the others. The debris of charred, shattered piers drifted by. We beached our boats near a mixed stand of palms and cottons.

Rira, the only woman among my adjutants, stalked toward me, boots sinking into silty soil. The pounding sun highlighted each strange detail on the mask that forever concealed her face. It grimaced at the world with a sea monster’s features: goggling eyes, fanning fins, and flaring, toothy lips. A green patina darkened its dull gray surface. Behind it trailed a bleached and dreadful mane.

From the neck down, Rira affected the prideful finery of a pirate queen. Her neckline plunged aggressively, daring others to stare. Tattoos whorled across her burnished skin.

With the tip of her cutlass she gestured down the shore. She moved with an exaggerated deliberateness, as if the magic of my ancient sword yoked her physically. “I found the *Whelk*’s boats. We’ll scuttle them, yes?”

I shook my head. “If we want Common’s crew to go, we must preserve their means of departure.”

Rira balled her fists.

“Were there signs of other boats?” I asked.

“Come and gone, Challys Argent.” Where Seagrave tweaked me by calling me “mum,” Rira dropped honorifics altogether, insisting on my full name. This odd expression of contempt washed over me now, as it did with the old salt.

I permitted myself a curse—a weakness acquired from my crew. “Then we’re too late.”

“We’re not turning around? Your crew keen for action.”

I led the procession into town. “We may not have him, but we can find out where he went.”

As the burning structures of Moonplum grew clearer through the smoke, I saw how great an overstatement it was to call the place a town. It was less a port than a hope for the future. A sparse collection of storehouses and cottages huddled down the length of a muddied laneway, not far from the ruined docks. The lane terminated at the foot of a wooden temple, its vivid paint not yet scourged by alkaline air.

An earlier self might have mourned the folly of Moonplum’s founders. Its location near a wide river mouth would seem favorable for shipping, with ready access to riches hewn from the Mwangi Jungle. Instead, its accessibility to the sea merely placed it within easy grasp of my sea-raiding compatriots, whose home islands lay only a few hundred miles to the northwest. Well-placed ports were farther away, and better defended.

The attacking fleet waited till the aspiring magnates of Moonplum had taken in goods worth stealing, then landed with swords and fire. Only a single wonder pertained: that they’d disciplined themselves long enough for the locals to build this much.

A series of screams cut short my postulations.

At one time the terror and pain in them would have sliced through me as well. In the Shackles I learned to hide such reactions, which serve only to announce oneself as prey. Over the course of my years on the *Aspidochelone*, I perfected this concealment. Now my pity is so well hid even I cannot find it. I have transformed myself into a grouping of angles and calculations.

I sped my pace to a cautious trot, cutlass at the ready. The faint heat of the four active geas crystals in its hilt radiated into my hand.

Otondo loomed at my left, grinning. “A scrap,” he drooled.

Otondo, once captain of the brigantine *Ravager*, stood ten and a half feet tall in his shaggy boots. A bony ball of a bottom-heavy head, all jaw and little cranium, balanced on a frame of rippling muscle, with no neck visible between them. Corded veins crisscrossed gray-green flesh. They pulsed so strongly that an astute visitor could count out his heart rate simply by looking at him. Black pinprick eyes stared from beneath a thick and rolling brow. Otondo carried the largest cutlass I had ever seen, specially smithed for his ogre-sized hands. He was as heavy as my next three biggest men put together.

“Remember,” I said to him, “the Rule still applies.”

His blunt-toothed smile faded. “I hoped you wouldn’t say.”

“It always applies, universally.”

“How about a little leeway, Cap’n?”

The ogre’s attempts to ingratiate would induce shudders, were I still the shuddering type.



“No leeway whatsoever. No eating.” I brandished Siren Call’s hilt. His crystal, the one that held a sliver of his soul, brightened. Otondo’s complexion dulled. He shrank back, his face that of a scolded dog.

“One day...” he growled.

When I increased my step, he fell back, muttering. A mocking chuckle whispered through the group. It could only be Adalbert Aspodell, the fourth of my murderous aides. Otondo responded with a canine growl. I plunged on; it was me their jockeying was meant to goad.

For a complement of fifty, we proceeded with admirable silence. The first of the buildings we passed had been reduced completely to smoldering planks. Up ahead, crew from the *Whelk*—and, for all I could tell, stragglers from departed vessels—lurched between still-extant structures. Each hunched under the weight of something looted: jugs of rum, kegs of ale, casks of salt fish. One pirate bore on his shoulders a plush, outsized chair. Two of the men carried young boys. Their immediate fates I declined to contemplate in detail. If they survived, they too would become pirates aboard the *Whelk*, perhaps one day completing the circle with like abductions in a similar doomed town.

Drunk on brandy and bloodshed, the crew of the *Whelk* took us in with molasses-slow comprehension. It dawned on them that they were dispersed, while we of the *Aspidochelone* stood in good formation. That they were tired and dulled, while we were square awake.

Otondo was at my side again. “A little provocation, Cap’n?”

Were incipient violence a perfume, he’d have reeked with it—as would the other three.

“At this revel, we are uninvited guests,” I told them. “Let us act with matchless etiquette.”

A portly, mutton-chopped pirate dropped an ornate sandalwood box and lunged our way. With one hand he wiped at his mouth; with the other, he drew his blade. “Who are you and what are you doing here?”

“I am Challys Argent, captain of the *Aspidochelone*, and this is my crew.”

He squinched his face in disapproval. “The Pathfinder captain?”

I bowed. “The same.”

He spat. The wind blew his sputum toward me. Otondo tensed. He checked my boots. The missile had landed short of its target. I held out my free hand to him, keeping him in check.

The *Whelk* crew assembled themselves behind their spokesman.

“You did not sign on to our raid. You are nothing but late-lilies. We did not fight and die so that a pack of sea hyenas might show up to trump our loot.”

“I would surmise that you fought and your victims died. Regardless, you may rest assured. We are not here to

steal from fellow fliers of the black skull flag. Such would contravene the code of our Hurricane King.”

“Save your lies for fools. Why else would you come here?”

“For what Pathfinders always seek. Information. Where is your captain?”

Mutton-chop straightened his spine. “I am captain of the *Whelk*.”

“I am told that honor belongs to Josiah Common. And, as everyone knows, one to two of his eyes are made of glass. Whereas yours, one as bloodshot as the other, do not fit the description.”

“I am Captain Strane Trafton. Joe Fork-Cutter met his final tragedy in the course of the raid. We now mete out vengeance, for the crime of undue resistance.”

“And I don’t suppose Josiah might have been done in by a confederate’s blow?”

“What do you insinuate?”

“Was your raid not designed and led by Kered Firk?”

The name had scarcely left my mouth when a line of flame burst from the back ranks of the *Whelk* crew. I caught a flash of a brass spell-spitter—fashioned, as per the local vogue, not as a normal wand, but with a grip like that of a crossbow or pistol. I ducked the burst, though it grazed the brim of my tricorne hat, setting it ablaze. As I pulled the burning item from my head, battle cries rang and the two sides ran to engage. My hair flew free, impeding vision. I leapt back to miss the arc of an incoming ax. It was Trafton, engaging captain to captain with a most uncaptainly weapon.

I weaved and turned in search of a patch of unimpeded ground. The Moonplum laneway became the stage for a wild scrum. Though the battlers had as much room as could be desired, they fought like pirates, instinctively clumping themselves into a space the size of a galleon’s deck. But here there was no rigging to seize, no railings to climb upon, no shark-filled waters to heave the foe into. Flashing my cutlass in a series of unpredictable feints, I forced Trafton back. My blade caught his weapon hand. He shrank from me, grimacing in pain. A white line across his knuckles transformed into a red one. I planted a boot on his leg and sent him toppling. He landed on his spine in the mud and slid, coming to a halt near Otondo, who exchanged blows with a burly counterpart. The ogre glanced back to note the rival captain’s presence. Trafton saw his vulnerability and tried to roll. As he thrust at his primary foe with his enormous cutlass, Otondo casually stepped on the new captain’s throat. Trafton’s larynx cracked, sending a qualm through friend and foe alike. As he choked and died, the melee resumed. The death of a second captain in one day buoyed my crew with homicidal glee, and the *Whelk*’s with vindictive rage.

This fight offered us nothing. I needed distance from it, to see if I could call it to a truce. Sidestepping an incoming

HELL COME ASHORE

rapier thrust, I leapt onto the porch of a smoldering, emptied warehouse. Charred planks wobbled beneath my heels.

My crew arranged themselves to support their four most potent killers. They gave Otondo a wide berth as he muscled his way through the opposition. He sliced a man's head clean off, then kicked the decapitated body to down a second enemy. The ogre speared his cutlass through the slaughtered man and into the live one, who then joined his comrade in death.

Seagrave waded into the thickest concentration of foes, parting them as a prow cuts through waves. He took blows unflinchingly, the armor hidden beneath his foul greatcoat turning blades aside. The old salt leveraged his bulk to power his blows. Striking as often with elbows, fists, and kicks as with his sword, he bowled down pirates to and fro.

Crew from the *Aspidochelone* ranked around Rira to protect her spell-weaving hands from jostling distractions. She conjured balls of multicolored force and sent them spinning through the fray. They unerringly sought her chosen enemies. With each anguished cry or welling bruise, a spiteful chuckle echoed from her mask.

Adalbert Aspodell, who favored a nobleman's rapier over the expected cutlass, danced lithely around the fight's periphery. With a dolphin's grace he stabbed opportunistically. His attacks set aside force in favor of cruel precision. He flicked his blade's razor tip between ribs, across throats, into eardrums. Throughout the display he held his high-cheeked, mocking features in an attitude of wry detachment.

Led by these four, my crew sent the *Whelk's* reeling. As one, the losers dispersed. Bruised and bleeding pirates ran for the beach, for the jungle, and into the remains of buildings.

"We hunt them down?" Otondo asked.

"Only him." I pointed. A tall pirate of elven aspect dashed for the palms, silk tunic billowing. From a scabbard on his hip, the hilt of his spell-spitter gleamed. It was he who tried to set me aflame. "He's one of Firsk's, I'll wager." Rira sprinted after him, followed by Otondo. "Keep him in condition to talk!" I called.

The crew fell to looting, plucking up the prizes dropped by our rivals. As rightful as these appropriations were, I tasked them to delay in favor of a search for survivors. They took the wounded to a warehouse the fires had only lightly touched. Our priests, Jeffret and Cold Bendani, attended the injured. They venerated green-haired Gozreh, the ever-changeable god of seas and sailors. They incanted her healing magics, sealing wounds and washing away pain.

I left them to their work. The raiders had dealt with their victims savagely; it seemed unlikely that any would be in immediate shape to speak.

Alert for reprisals, we strode to the temple. The four sides of its tower bore the colorful sigils of deities. Gozreh's faced the coast, as is customary, represented by an inward-curling length of seaweed. Also represented were the golden key of Abadar the merchant, the blue butterfly of Desna the traveler, and Erastil the provider, who was locally symbolized by a golden boat, its sails filled by Gozreh's winds.

"I enjoy being teased as much of the next man," said Adalbert Aspodell. "More so, in fact. Yet isn't it past time to tell us what you're after here?"

"We seek Kered Firsk," I told him.

"Yes, yes, that you've said. But there must be a good reason behind this. You don't follow the wake of the Monster Captain on a whim."



"Otondo isn't pretty, but he's effective."



"I'll tell all when fact has been sifted from speculation."

A laugh purred in his throat. "You think me a gull."

"In what sense, Aspodell?"

"You might tell something. Never all."

A foreboding creak issued from behind the temple doors. They hung askew on their hinges. The sound mingled a wooden groan with a metallic clatter.

I stepped into a vandalized foyer, over the shards of a mirror knocked from its frame. A version of myself stared back at me from each of the pieces. In this strange context my own features surprised me. I saw hollow cheeks, raised veins, wires of muscle, and gold-flecked eyes. My face was all edges and planes, its former softness jettisoned long ago. Years under the pitiless sun of the Fever Sea had bronzed my skin and worn into its surface a network of tributary wrinkles. What I beheld, I did not dislike. On the deck of a pirate ship, austerity begat authority. Yet there had to be swagger, too, and this was supplied by a cascade of coppery hair. Garments of fine fabric and simple cut bespoke both wealth and practicality. Top salts will sign on with a hard captain, but never a poor one.

Velvet curtains clung tenuously to a bent and broken rod. When I beheld what waited inside, I swayed as if physically struck.

Nearly a dozen people hung from the temple rafters, suspended on lengths of chain. Rust and gore reddened the links. The victims had been stripped bare, or nearly so. Then their skin had been flayed from their bodies. Most had none left at all. A few had been flensed selectively, as if their torturer had grown bored or distracted partway through.

The tableau of carnage summoned a tumble of buried recollections. With them coursed phantom sensations: the cooler ocean breezes that swept the coast of Varisia, and the goosebumps they brought. I pictured myself as but a strip of a girl, kneeling on the rocky shores near the towering archive where I was born and raised. My mind's eye laid them out before me: dozens of lifeless bodies, blood soaked through their scholars' robes. My mother, my father, my uncles and cousins and friends. The raiders had come when our protectors were gone. They sacked the tower, burned the books, threw the tapestries into the sea. They destroyed that which was priceless, and exulted over the few coffers of coins they pried from our meager

treasury. For murder's sake they murdered. Of all of us, only I had successfully hidden from them.

I chilled in that hot Moonplum temple, feeling the ghost touch of the rain that pelted my skin so long ago as I waited for the return of the Pathfinder ship. I heard again the vow I mouthed when finally they appeared. No longer would I follow the tradition of my family and my ancestors, seeking truth in the pages of books. I would be like our patrons, the men and women of the Pathfinder Society, who went out into a brutal world, seizing knowledge with sword and spell. And along

the way, when I found those who followed the creed of pillage and destruction, I would visit their cruelty upon them tenfold.

"Hooves of Asmodeus!"

Aspodell's exclamation pulled me from memory. His face had lost its usual sardonic aspect.

"Not quite," I said. "This was certainly homage to an evil deity. But not the God-Fiend. It was a priest of Rovagug that did this. Note the patches of exposed bone."

"I'd prefer not to."

"No?"

"A man of my proclivities respects certain boundaries. Butchery of this ilk goes far beyond them. I would not like to do this to anyone. Except you, of course, when the magic of that damnable sword lapses and I'm free to avenge my enslavement. But that goes without saying."

I treated the provocation as unworthy of reply. Pushing away revulsion, I peered closely at one of the hanging bodies. There I saw a sigil I despised, a yawning mouth from which the legs of a spider sprouted. "Whoever did this carved the sigil of Rovagug into the surface of their bones. While they lived."

"Ghastly." Aspodell swallowed. "And the fellow who did this—you're sure we wish to encounter them?"

"That I am."

To my shock, a splutter vented from one of the supposed corpses. Blood spurted from his nose and into his mouth. He moaned, barely conscious.

"Get the priests," I told Aspodell. He slipped from the temple; I remained with the survivor. He was young and had been well muscled before the flayers started in on him. Blood obscured his features, and the extent of his injuries.

Unintelligible words spilled from the wretch's faltering lips.

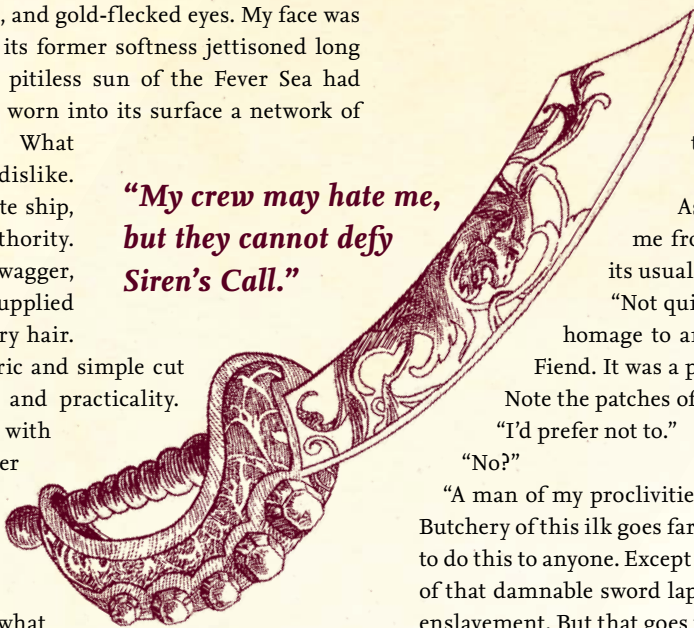
"Do not try to speak. Let us heal you first."

"Ww-wwon't l—lll..."

I searched my mind for soothing words but found none.

"Won't live..." he managed.

***"My crew may hate me,
but they cannot defy
Siren's Call."***



HELL COME ASHORE

“Hush, boy.” Had there been a part of him that was safe to touch, I would have laid a calming glove on it.

“Twill,” he said.

“Twill?”

“Www—wanted to know...”

“He was looking for a man named Twill?”

He assayed a slight nod of the head.

“Had Twill been here?”

His next gesture I took also for a nod, though it could have been a twitch.

“But he was not here when the pirates came.”

He seemed to shake his head, then stopped moving altogether. I took him for dead, but when Jeffret and Cold Bendani arrived, they set to work reviving him.

“Better without the chains, Captain,” said Jeffret, a wan man with hair the color of a pantry moth.

“I’ll see to that, ma’am,” said Seagrave, who had returned with the healers and Aspodell. “No luck so far finding the fire-thrower,” he said incidentally as he sized up the arrangement of columns, joists, and rafters. Withdrawing a pair of spikes from his belt, he hugged a wooden pillar and began to shift his bulk improbably up its length. I had seen him perform acts of unlikely balance many a time before, never ceasing to marvel at his agility. He reached the rafter and swung himself up on it with graceless ease. The rafter trembled, setting the suspended bodies to juddering. He clambered on hands and knees till he reached the chains that held the perhaps-living victim. With his left hand he found a new equilibrium. With his right, he pulled loose his cutlass. “Ready down there?”

“Aye,” replied Jeffret. He and Cold Bendani positioned themselves to catch the poor fellow.

Seagrave brought his cutlass down on the chain. Sparks flew. The magical blade howled like a mistral wind, and the chain fell in two pieces. The sea-priests took the wretch’s weight. On contact, he convulsed, without regaining consciousness. They carried him out of the temple on a sling of scavenged canvas, and the rest of us followed as Seagrave shinnied back down the column.

“Another dead end, then?” asked Aspodell.

“Quite the contrary,” I said. “Before we lost him, he said the one word that explains all: Twill.”

Aspodell knocked drying muck from his boots. “The significance of which you will now go on to explain.”

“Twill can only be the famed lockbreaker Twill Ninefingers. No other Twill could be worthy of Kered Firsk’s attention. He’s the best lock man within a thousand miles.”

“I believe I heard him spoken of as such, back in Drenchport,” interjected Seagrave. “Never met him.”

“And what does it tell you,” asked Aspodell, “that he seeks this locksmith?”

“When Kered Firsk returned to the Shackles, a rumor came with him. Right, Seagrave?”

“Word has it,” gruffed the fat pirate, “that he dug himself up a legendary treasure, out on some far atoll.”

“If he seeks Twill Ninefingers, I know what it is. The Treasure of Far Thallai.”

Aspodell’s pose of studied disinterest melted away. “Thallai?”

Seagrave’s features widened. “Thallai,” he whispered, as if it were a name that did not bear too loud an airing. “Many have sought it.”

“So much so that doubt pertains to its existence,” said Aspodell.

“The sea coughs up many a wonder,” said Seagrave.

“A golden cask with an impregnable lock?”

I nodded. “Impregnable to ordinary folk, but to one as skilled as Twill...”

“Which, if opened,” continued Seagrave, “becomes a gateway to an unearthly paradise. Where untold wealth lies scattered about, gold and gems as common as sand, ready for any man brave enough to scoop it up.”

“And there is nothing a worshiper of Rovagug, who is mindless destruction personified, would like more than to find and completely despoil an untouched paradise,” said Aspodell.

“Absolutely so,” I answered.

Aspodell lit up with uncharacteristic rapture. “If legend is to be believed, Far Thallai is much more than a beach scattered with gold and gems.”

“You say that like it’s nothing,” said Seagrave.

“Thallai is a place of innocence and beauty,” said Aspodell. “Inhabited by beings of stunning physical perfection, to whom distrust is foreign and wariness perverse.” He drifted into a pensive pause, then started. “We cannot allow Firsk the Flayer to open that cask.”

“Naturally not! We must be the ones!” A fresh flood of sweat boiled from Seagrave’s sooty face. It ran in rivulets, soaking into his noisome greatcoat.

I moved upwind of him. “I’m not sure I’d trust you, Aspodell, with lissome beings incapable of suspicion.”

The ex-nobleman scowled. “I was not always corrupt, you understand. In a place like Thallai a man could remake himself.” His voice grew faint. “Perhaps that’s what Kered Firsk seeks as well.”

“You would reform, in Far Thallai?”

“After my last bad act—which, my dear, would be gutting you.”

In the hilt of my sword, his geas gem glowed. I reached for it, prepared to exert its discipline on him, but he stilled himself. “At any rate, you can now explain what Kered Firsk seeks, but we are no closer to finding him.”

“Not so.”

“No?”

“The way to get Firsk the Flayer is through the man he seeks. Instead of chasing the Monster Captain, we find Twill Ninefingers.”



BESTIARY

Not all born to the deep stay there contentedly. Just as a starving man dares the surf to look down with hunger, so too do furtive things steal to the borders between sea and shore to cast black gazes up from the waves—knowing nothing of the world above except that it exists to supply an end to their appetites. Their ways are more ancient than ours, subtler, more efficient, but like us, they are not without their tricks, their experts, and their innovations. There is revolution in the water, and the waves mark the invincible border of our realm no more.

—Joachim Nolvel, *Breath in the Depth*

BESTIARY

A tidal wave of terrors begins to swell in this month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary. Every month for the entirety of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, expect a new surge of sea monsters, island denizens, and pirate legends made flesh. This month, low-level threats, piratical companions, and the herald of Besmara, goddess of pirates, wash up on deck.

SHIPS, SAILORS, AND OTHER VICTIMS

Aquatic beasts, wandering denizens of the deep, and low-level sea monsters fill this month's random encounter table, a collection well suited to scallywags just starting out on their piratical careers. These encounters are scaled with the assumption that the PCs are facing them alone and not with the full force of their shipmates brought to bear. If such is not the case, most of these encounters might not prove much in the way of threats at all and the experience gained from each should be split among all who participated in the battle. Even though such situations aren't a fantastic way to award PCs extra experience, there's nothing wrong with demonstrating how formidable an entire pirate crew can be.

Aside from sea monsters, the PCs might also encounter other vessels in their travels—the ships of merchants and other pirates, or stranger craft. Even though the PCs don't have control of a ship for a significant portion of this month's adventure, that's not to say they won't have the opportunity to charge into battle against other crews of seafarers. The following presents three ships the party might encounter at any point during the adventure, giving the PCs the opportunity to gain a bit more experience and plunder on the front lines of a pirate attack. GMs using the plunder rules presented on page 61 of this volume should award the PCs 1d4 points of plunder for any ship they successfully raid.

Additionally, GMs who haven't already checked out *GameMastery Flip-Map: Pirate Ship* or *GameMastery Map Pack: Ship's Cabins* might want to look into such game aids, which were specifically created to aid in encounters for this Adventure Path.

Blostin's Second Chance: The vessel of captain Bormandu Blostin sails from Augustana in Andoran to Eleder in Saragava, trading northern cereals, metal wares, and textiles for southern spices, exotic animal pelts, native crafts, and other mundane items—hoping to avoid the notice of pirates by not trading in richer goods. The small ship is crewed by 21 shipmates (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 294), Captain Blostin (use the stats for a shopkeep on page 284 of the *GameMastery Guide*), and the captain's tired hunting dog Duchess (use the stats for a normal dog on page 87 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*). Only Duchess and 1d4 shipmates will fight to defend the ship—the cowardly captain surrenders at the first sign of danger in the desperate hope of not garnering the pirates' ire.

LOW-LEVEL OCEAN ENCOUNTERS

%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1d4 merfolk	1/2	<i>Bestiary</i> 204
6–11	1 fuath	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 142
12–16	1d4 grindylows	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 148
17–21	1 squid	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 259
22–27	1d6 dolphins	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 88
28–32	1d6 locathahs	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 179
33–36	1 adaro	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 7
37–40	1 bunyip	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 50
41–44	1 wereshark	3	<i>Isles of the Shackles</i> 54
45–51	1d8 stingrays	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 232
52–56	1d4 reefclaws	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 234
57–62	2d6 grindylows	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 148
63–67	1 sea hag	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 243
68–72	1 cecaelia	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 49
73–78	1d4 draugr pirates	5	<i>Isles of the Shackles</i> 62
79–83	1 giant moray eel	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 119
84–88	1 globster	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 131
89–92	1d6 sahuagin	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 239
93–96	1 jellyfish swarm	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 170
97–100	1d8 sharks	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 247

Ginger Belle: From the charming Taldan co-captains Velvarisa and Bethany and the ship's spotless decks, most never guess the *Ginger Belle* is actually a slaver ship. Putting in at various ports in Qadira, Rahadom, and Cheliox, the captains pride themselves on selling servants of the highest caliber to the well-to-do of the Shackles, making regular stops at Port Peril and Hell Harbor. The 28 members of the crew consist mostly of shipmates and two guards (*GameMastery Guide* 294 and 260, respectively), while the captains have the same stats as slavers (*GameMastery Guide* 266). Only the captains and the guards fight in defense of the ship, making this a CR 6 encounter. Five slaves currently languish in the ship's hold, each having the same stats as a farmer (*GameMastery Guide* 309).

The Pelican: This Nidalese vessel recently picked up a pair of stowaways when it put into port at Greenblood in the Sodden Lands—two crystal oozes (*Bestiary* 166). These aquatic gray oozes slipped on board and devoured most of the ship's rowers before the guards realized what was afoot, but by that point their disorganized resistance was doomed. The rest of the crew and the ship's captain, Kelizmar Dragnazz, dissolved soon after. Lethargic after their meal, the two crystal oozes still linger in the bilges of the *Pelican* as it drifts toward its inevitable end.



DRAGON, TIDEPOOL

This small draconic creature seems better suited for the waves than wind, its wings sweeping along its body like massive fins. Light from the water refracts off its resilient-looking cerulean hide as it snaps crustacean-like claws.

TIDEPOOL DRAGON

CR 3



XP 800

CN Tiny dragon (aquatic)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)**hp** 30 (4d12+4)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6**Immune** paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.**Melee** bite +6 (1d3), 2 claws +6 (1d3 plus attach)**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Special Attacks** breath weapon (5-ft. line, 2d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 13 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th; concentration +6)3/day—*freedom of movement* (self only)**Spells Known** (caster level 4th; concentration +6)2nd (4/day)—*slipstream**1st (7/day)—*hydraulic push**, *obscuring mist*0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 12), *detect poison*, *mage hand*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 13, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13**Feats** Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes**Skills** Fly +12, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +9, Survival +9, Swim +15**Languages** Common, Draconic**SQ** amphibious

ECOLOGY

Environment warm coastlines**Organization** solitary, pair, or clutch (3–6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When a tidepool dragon hits with a claw attack, it automatically grapples its foe, dealing automatic damage with that claw each round.**Breath Weapon (Su)** When a tidepool dragon uses its breath weapon underwater, it creates a 10-foot cone of superheated water rather than a line of fire (as noted above). This effect deals the breath weapon's damage to any creatures in the cone's area, though victims can still save to take only half damage.

Aquatic dragons similar in size and fickleness to faerie dragons and pseudodragons, tidepool dragons rule as

whimsical tyrants over miniature realms comprising coral forests, sand dune mountains, and low-tide menageries. Preferring to inhabit coastal regions throughout the world's warmer climes, these dragon-kin make their lairs amid balmy lagoons and hidden coves, favoring any seaside setting devoid of stronger predators. A combination of chitinous shell—similar in shade to that of a blue crab—and scales the color of clear tropical waters covers every tidepool dragon, the shade deepening through twilight hues to a shade as dark as a ocean abyss.

Tidepool dragons typically measure about 2 feet long and weigh approximately 14 pounds. They are known to live for about 300 years.

ECOLOGY

Despite their size, tidepool dragons are hardy and well suited to their environment. Their sweeping fin-wings work equally well both above and beneath the water. While underwater, these dragons use their fins to make languid, powerful strokes, propelling them forward in graceful bursts, but the strong, flexible musculature beneath the fins also allows them to make quick, dramatic turns essential in pursing eels, small fish, and other agile prey. Above the water these same appendages work like wings, the membranous skin spreading over bones and cartilage to catch currents of air. Many observers who have glimpsed these creatures both above and below the waves claim that they do not fly so much as swim through the skies. The tiny dragons' dense muscle mass, particularly in their tails, allows them to create momentum strong enough to break the surface of the water and send them skyward in their characteristic glides. Although they prefer to eat fish, tidepool dragons often use their flight to chase seabirds off the surface of the waves and high into the sky, while the small, tough teeth that line every tidepool dragon's mouth can easily crack the hard shells of crabs and other shellfish.

The tidepool dragon is amphibious, possessing both gills and lungs, and can exist outside of water indefinitely. While it is in flight, muscles stretch its gill slits so they lie flat along the body, decreasing resistance to the wind. At the apex of the dragon's complex respiratory system, near the base of the creature's throat, a pair of small bones hang down. Tidepool dragons can vibrate these bones at an almost unthinkable speed, and the furious motion gives off intense heat. They can then draw water through their bodies from their gills and push it out of their mouths. As this torrent of water passes the vibrating bones, it heats to temperatures beyond scalding, capable of burning flesh and even melting glass. Even when not submerged, tidepool dragons can draw moisture from the air through their gills to power their breath weapons. But despite the potency of a tidepool dragon's breath

BESTIARY

when used in flight or on land, these creatures usually employ their breath weapons while underwater. When the dragons are submerged, their scalding gout of water diffuses into a small cloud of boiling water, allowing them to affect entire schools of fish or other groups of prey in a single boiling burst.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Tidepool dragons get their name from their tendency to frequent small coastal pools, where they bask and sleep because they are usually safe from other predators there and their shell-like hides blend well with the brilliant colors of local aquatic fauna. Those attempting to capture or otherwise contain a tidepool dragon find it a challenging task, as the creature's *freedom of movement* ability makes most nets, ropes, and simple attempts to grab it near useless. "Slippery as a tide wyrm" is a phrase often bandied about by sailors and other seafarers when trying to cross treacherously wet decks or wrestle the rigging of a loose and blowing sail.

Despite being almost impossible to catch, tidepool dragons can be bargained with rather readily, as their interests, while fickle, are quite simple. Those seeking tidepool dragons' favor—or, at least, hoping not to incur their mischief—can make offerings to the dragon, typically in the form of coins, gems, or particularly shiny shells so that the miniature wyrms can mimic their larger kin. Additionally, most tidepool dragons enjoy rare fish that cannot be found in their home waters, or fruits and vegetables from far inland that they've never sampled.

Capricious and self-serving, these miniature dragons possess a less savory reputation than their faerie dragon or pseudodragon cousins, making enemies as easily as they make allies. Highly territorial, most tidepool dragons take offense if the waters and coasts near their lairs are intruded upon, blasting trespassers with their breath weapons or perpetrating various pranks upon them. If satisfied, though—typically by being bribed with shiny baubles or salty food—tidepool dragons can prove quite helpful, serving other creatures for the promise of more rewards. Clever sailors have been known to leave trails of enticing foods in their ships' wakes in an effort to draw the attention of tidepool dragons. If successful, a vessel can gain a valuable helper, capable of acting as a lookout both far above and far below the water. Several aquatic species, such as merfolk, tritons, aquatic elves, and even sahuagin, also recognize the benefits of keeping tidepool dragons as allies, and some explorers have recorded colonies of such aquatic humanoids where well-fed clutches of these dragons act as sentries or scouts.

When left to their own devices, tidepool dragons live in small coastal caves, usually in mated pairs or related family clutches. These lairs always contain exit shafts



into the sky beyond since tidepool dragon eggs and new hatchlings are a favorite prey of bunyips. Tidepool dragon eggs are about the size of a chicken or crocodile egg, but are marked with the same colors that will eventually grace the hatchlings' scales. Parents hatch their young and then raise them until they are capable of surviving on their own, around age 3. At that point, young tidepool dragons set off to find mates and indulge their species' rampant curiosity. Single youths also band together to form non-familial pods for hunting and adventure.

TIDEPOOL DRAGONS AS FAMILIARS

Although difficult to approach, tidepool dragons sometimes choose to serve as the familiars of unruly spellcasters and those who go out of their way to feed them rich or exotic foods. Spellcasters of 7th level or higher with an alignment within one step of chaotic neutral can gain a tidepool dragon as a familiar by taking the Improved Familiar feat.



INCUTILIS

This strange nautilus drags itself forward on oversized tentacles, its crimson-streaked flesh textured like the surface of some exposed, alien brain.

INCUTILIS

CR 2



XP 600

LE Tiny aberration (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size)

hp 18 (4d8)

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles +3 (1d4+2 plus grab)

Special Attacks puppetmaster

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 11, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Step Up

Skills Bluff +3, Climb +10, Disguise +3, Perception +8, Stealth +17, Swim +17

Languages Aboleth, Aklo, Aquan, Common, Undercommon (cannot speak); telepathy 30 ft.

SQ amphibious

ECOLOGY

Environment any oceans

Organization solitary, pair, colony (3–12) plus enslaved puppets

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Puppetmaster (Su) As a full-round action, an incutilis can drive its lesser tendrils into any helpless Small or Medium creature it occupies the same square as, and pump the victim full of poison and chemicals. The victim is killed instantly and becomes a zombielike creature under the incutilis's control. This zombie is not treated as being undead, and is immune to spells and effects that only affect undead (like damage from positive energy). The incutilis is attached to this zombie—typically by the head—occupying the same square and moving along with it. The incutilis can make attacks with its tentacles independently of the zombie's slam. It can also retract its tendrils as a move action, but doing so causes the zombie to collapse and revert to a normal corpse. The incutilis must retract its tendrils before it can move away from a zombie it's attached to. Any attack that deals damage to the zombie also deals 1 point of damage to the incutilis, regardless of how much damage is dealt to the zombie, while area-affecting spells affect both the puppeteer and zombie. A character can attempt to attack just the incutilis, but takes a –4 penalty on the attack roll. Killing the incutilis destroys the zombie.

Scholars know life began in the sea, and some—either paranoid or visionary—claim that the sea has manipulated the course of humanoid life through ages beyond reckoning, citing the incutilis as evidence of this. A strange sort of sea creature that appears to be little more than an oversized cephalopod, an incutilis hides a significant intelligence behind its unassuming appearance. Though most incutilises live their entire lives amid the deepest trenches of the darkest seas, some venture to the border between water and land, revealing terrible control over land-dwelling flesh and an alien disregard for sentient life. Limited in their ability to cross this border and travel on land by their aquatic physiologies, these aberrations overcome this hurdle with a lethal solution, slaying land dwellers and commandeering their flesh to bear the incutilis on shore. To what ends these beings seek to explore the surface remains a mystery—perhaps they do so out of hunger, perhaps out of curiosity, or perhaps because they were sent.

A typical incutilis weighs approximately 25 pounds, 30 with its shell, and measures 4 feet from the tips of its longest tentacles to the top of its shell.

ECOLOGY

Although incutilises can live as bottom feeders, their favorite foods seem to be higher life forms—sharks, whales, and sentient ocean dwellers—and they appear to make little distinction between the living and the dead. They also make no obvious distinctions between sentient and nonsentient victims, a trait that comes across as either an extreme form of racial arrogance or total ruthlessness. At the same time, incutilises exhibit strong self-preservation compulsions, going out of their way to avoid dangerous predators and large groups of other sentient beings, and preferring instead to operate from the shadows.

Incutilises' most remarkable physical process is their ability to invasively take over dead flesh. So long as a body is relatively intact, the aberration can extend the smaller, more delicate tendrils it typically keeps retracted into its shell. These tendrils are covered with myriad tiny barbs and smaller fibrous filaments it can wind into even the finest internal apertures of a living body with shocking speed and ease. Once the tendrils are in place, the strange chemical laboratory that makes up a incutilis's internal organs allows it to secrete strange chemicals and toxins directly into the body's muscles, causing deliberate contractions, releases, and convulsions that give freshly dead bodies the semblance of life, while those longer dead appear undead. This process requires the incutilis to be latched onto its victim, directing its every motion. If it retracts its tendrils, its host body collapses back into a pile of dead flesh.

BESTIARY

Despite the remarkable nature of incutilises' corpse animation process, it is far from subtle. An incutilis cannot easily hide its prominent tendrils and gleaming shell, meaning that any corpse looks far from normal in well-lit conditions. In the dark or at a distance, however, the illusion can prove somewhat convincing, though still unnerving as the body twitches and jerks with the spasms caused by its aquatic master. Typically, witnesses who see a corpse animated by an incutilis believe it to be some sort of waterlogged undead, a misidentification that has led to the demise of more than one well-intentioned cleric.

Incutilises can survive both on land and at sea, though they are at an obvious disadvantage out of water, as their bodies are specialized for swimming, not dragging themselves along dry terrain. This limit to their mobility seems to be the primary reason they seek out corpses to take control over or unsuspecting humanoid or animals to overwhelm, claiming their bodies as convenient conveyances. Despite this, their actions rarely seem deliberately malicious, but rather result from a decision made out of dispassionate necessity. Whether they realize that their method of taking over the bodies of other living creatures is an affront to such beings or even have any concept of what death means proves entirely unclear.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Those few aware of incutilises rarely know the creatures by name. Rather, tales of their terrors—of shambling, flesh-garbed cephalopods and whole villages overwhelmed by invaders from the deep—spread through ports and among crews of sailors, the stuff of tall tales and the lies of drunks. But regularly enough, coastal fishing communities or the fortresses of petty pirate kings turn up deserted, their occupants vanished except, occasionally, for a few strange, oversized nautilus shells.

Incutilises can turn up in nearly any body of saltwater, but seem to favor warmer climes. More than even seeking warmer waters, however, these aquatic aberrations most frequently appear near deep undersea trenches. This is possibly because of some preference for the pressure of the depths or the darkness, but some also propose that incutilises are natives of the Darklands and inhabit the lightless seas of that realm in numbers unprecedented in the seas of the surface. This somewhat unpredictable range of habits has resulted in rumors of incutilises appearing in the most unusual places, like freshwater ponds, inland fishing holes, even wells.

Incutilises prove highly logical in their decision-making, seeming to know nothing of or care nothing for emotion or sympathy. This causes many who first encounter them to

believe they're nothing more than ravenous creatures, flesh stealers driven to hunt beyond their native environments. In truth, groups of incutilises act with great efficiency and deliberateness. Such bands also gauge the potential of a possible new food source before acting to claim it, avoiding acts that would eliminate their entire food source too quickly. They might kill off a few coastal communities, but avoid wiping out entire coastal populations in a region. In other cases, a group of corpse-riding incutilises might capture a significant portion of a community's population, trapping their victims in sea caves where the incutilises can come and go as they please, where others of their race can come and collect bodies to use on land, or where their prey are sequestered like herd animals.





KELPIE'S WRATH

The skull of some many-fanged sea monster adorns the bow of this ominous pirate vessel, a grim ship made all the more disturbing by its apparent lack of a crew.

KELPIE'S WRATH

CR 15



XP 51,200

CN Colossal outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, water)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., keen scent; **Perception** +23

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 6, flat-footed 30 (+5 deflection, -1 Dex, +24 natural, -8 size)

hp 297 (18d10+198); fast healing 10

Fort +22, **Ref** +5, **Will** +13

DR 10/lawful; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 10; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.; rush

Melee 3 incorporeal touch +25 (3d6 plus 3d6 electricity and 3d6 fire)

Ranged telekinesis +21 (varies)

Space 40 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

Special Attacks keelhaul, swallow whole (1d10+7 damage, AC 22, 29 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +21)

At will—*commune with nature*, *dancing lights*, *know direction*, *telekinesis* (DC 18)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *cloudkill* (DC 18), *control winds*, *invisibility sphere*, *major image* (DC 16, within its reach only), *plane shift* (DC 18), *seeming* (DC 18, other creatures only), *teleport*, *water breathing*, *widened fog cloud*

1/day—*summon* (level 7, 11–20 draugr [Bestiary 2] 100%)

STATISTICS

Str 40, **Dex** 8, **Con** 32, **Int** 9, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +41; **CMD** 55

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Disruptive, Greater Overrun, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Spellbreaker, Stand Still

Skills Knowledge (engineering) +11, Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +23, Sense Motive +14, Survival +23, Swim +44

Languages Common; telepathy 200 ft.

SQ fighter training, no breath

ECOLOGY

Environment any water

Organization solitary

Treasure double

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fighter Training (Ex) The herald counts its Hit Dice as fighter levels for the purpose of qualifying for feats and other abilities.

Keelhaul (Ex) If the herald hits a creature with two or more incorporeal touch attacks in 1 round, it can perform a

reposition combat maneuver as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the herald moves the target into or through a square adjacent to it (including over or under itself), the target takes 1d6 points of slashing or bludgeoning damage (herald's choice) for every 5 feet of this movement. If this movement results in the target being underwater, the target must hold its breath or begin to drown. Alternatively, if the herald can reposition the target to the center of its space, it can attempt to force the target into its cargo hold and snap the doors shut, holding the target in place as the swallow whole ability. The herald can hold up to four Medium or smaller creatures or one Large creature with this ability.

Rush (Ex) Once per minute for 1 round, the herald can move at a swim speed of 150 feet, even downward.

Telekinesis (Su) The herald makes ranged attacks by telekinetically hurling objects or creatures on its deck as weapons. This ability functions as the spell *telekinesis* (CL 18th). It can use the ability on objects or creatures of up to 375 pounds, dealing 1d6 points of damage per 25 pounds of the hurled object or creature. If the herald attempts to hurl a creature with this ability, that creature can resist the effect with a successful Will save (DC 18). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Besmara's herald is *Kelpie's Wrath*, a haunted ship that is a living being. It looks like a storm-battered pirate vessel with the skull and spine of some great sea creature mounted on the prow, with eerie lights flickering on its deck and streaming from its masts. The ship is the source of many horror tales of abandoned ships found in the ocean or spectral ships crewed by ghosts, but it is actually an independent creature with a malign, vengeful intelligence. On the rare occasions when it comes to the mortal seas at Besmara's bidding, it usually does so to punish some buccaneer for a horrid blasphemy against the Pirate Queen. Far more often it is left to its own devices, sailing mortal waters, the Ethereal or Astral Planes, or strange dream-realms in search of plunder, danger, and glory.

The ship's origins are mysterious and legends about it are contradictory. In some stories it was originally the flagship of a notorious pirate king who swore to forever serve Besmara, and when he finally died she merged his spirit with his ship so he could continue his service. Other tales tell of a demon-tainted kelpie that grew to a monstrous size and was kept as a beloved pet by the goddess like a mad dog until it was slain by adventurers and resurrected in this form to continue its predations. Still others speak of a devout priest-captain of Besmara who swore to bed no other woman so he could service the goddess in the afterlife, but then fell in love with a girl in a coastal village; according to this tale, the goddess cursed the priest to always roam the sea and never touch land so he would always pine for the love he could not

BESTIARY

have. The ship does not answer queries about its origin, and if pressed on the matter it has a habit of grabbing its interrogators, diving hundreds of feet under the water, and casually watching them gasp out the last of their air before it tears them limb from limb.

The ship is completely animate and needs no crew—it can tie and release its lines; raise, lower, and adjust its sails; open or close all of its doors; and so on. It moves about foreign objects (such as cargo) using *telekinesis*, and it sometimes does the same to its rare passengers, slamming doors on hands or throwing people overboard if it feels a lack of respect. Though it has a wheel and rudder, it resists mortal attempts to steer it as if it were a mundane ship—something it considers very disrespectful.

ECOLOGY

Kelpie's Wrath has no need to eat, drink, or even breathe. Because it can “swim” in any direction, including underwater, it may be found on the surface, cruising deep beneath the sea, or even skimming the bottom of the ocean. If facing an opponent it cannot easily defeat, it is likely to retreat deep underwater (assuming its foe cannot easily follow) or use *teleport* or *plane shift* to reach a safe place. It prods old wrecked ships for loot, storing its prizes within itself and only relinquishing its treasures when the goddess desires something it carries. Many loot caches on the sea floor actually belong to the ship, buried and marked in its memory for later counting.

When called by mortals, it demands treasure as payment for its services, preferring chests full of gems and gold coins. It has a lecherous, voyeuristic streak, however, and has been known to lower its price if arrangements are made for mortals to perform carnal acts on its decks—while it telepathically murmurs approvingly. If properly bribed, it serves with grudging loyalty until the task is done, then leaves. It is best suited for tasks requiring the destruction or terrorizing of enemy ships or fleets, though it can easily transport dozens of people or tons of cargo anywhere in the world or even to another plane. It is also willing to serve as a lure or decoy, disguising itself as a slow, loot-rich merchant vessel or mysterious shipwreck in a cove.

The ship is fully mobile in waterlike environments on other planes, including the Ethereal and Astral Planes. It enjoys sailing the “waters” of the ethereal sea and raiding xill settlements, or changing through clusters of soul-predators in the Astral Plane. It also finds pleasure in the bizarre seascape of the Maelstrom and has ventured into watery parts of the Abyss, though it is always ready to plane shift if it suspects a trap or a shift in the terrain that would trap it.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Kelpie's Wrath sometimes follows Besmara's ship, the *Seawraith*, at a respectful distance on its travels through

the planes, like a well-heeled dog afraid to attract too much attention to itself. When commanded by the goddess, it immediately complies, mixing a need for approval with an abject fear of punishment for any perceived disobedience. The ship acts like the only thing it cares about is the goddess, and is willing to sacrifice itself for her approval—it would swim through lava or acid, or run itself aground on a beach of adamantite spikes to please her.

Though the ship has no need of crew, it sometimes offers to save drowning sailors in exchange for a number years of service. Those who accept vanish and are not seen again—unless the draugr it summons are actually the revenant forms of these rescued sailors. Whether these souls think half-life at the ship's beck and call is better than actual death is unknown, for they do not speak of it. Some pirate-priests believe the ship is searching for a soul great enough to take its place, becoming the new mind in charge of the living ship and freeing whatever controls it to live again or pass on to Pharasma's Boneyard.





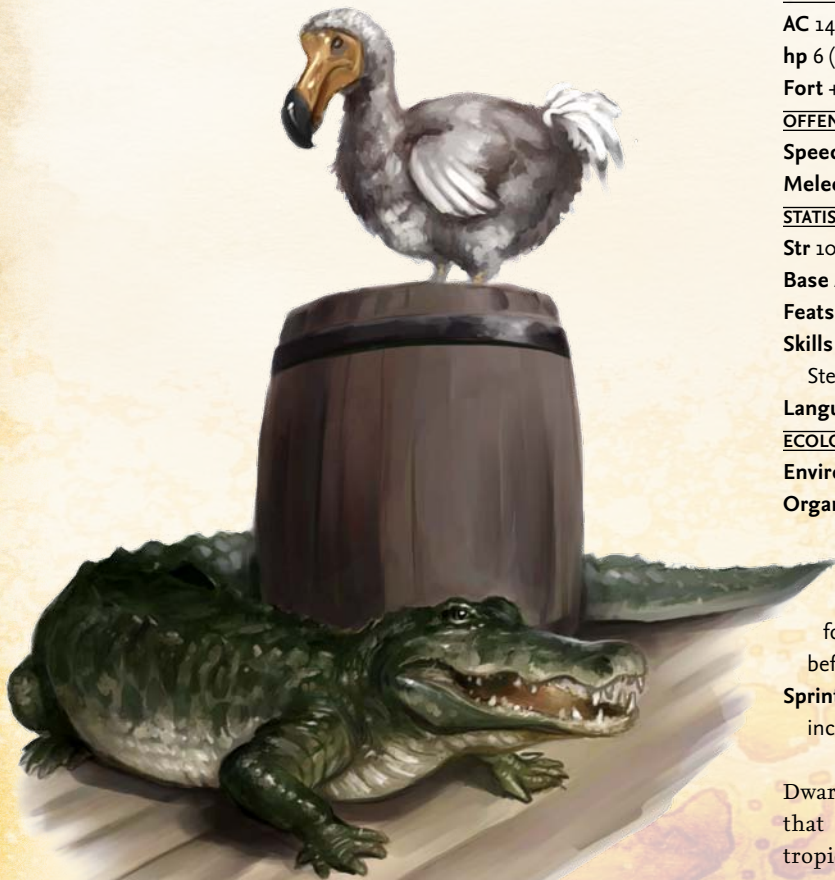
PIRATE FAMILIARS

Adventure-seekers, explorers, and pursuers of strange tales, pirates often come into contact with strange creatures as they sail the seas, occasionally taking them as pets or, in the cases of some spellcasters, as familiars. Presented here are four new creatures bound to make popular pirate companions.

DODO

This plump, gray flightless bird waddles about on ungainly looking legs, fearlessly bobbing its prodigious beak.

Dodo	CR 1/4	
XP 100		
N Small animal		
Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +3		
DEFENSE		
AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 size)		
hp 6 (1d8+2)		
Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1		
OFFENSE		
Speed 20 ft.		
Melee bite +1 (1d3-2)		
STATISTICS		
Str 3, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 9, Cha 6		



Base Atk +0; **CMB** -3; **CMD** 7

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception +3

ECOLOGY

Environment warm coastlines

Organization solitary, pair, or huddle (3-6)

Treasure none

These flightless birds typically inhabit isolated tropical islands devoid of predators. Their size and unfamiliarity with natural dangers contribute to a kind of racial boldness—or what some would call stupidity—causing them to bumble into precarious situations and making them easy targets for other creatures. The birds can easily be caught and slain, but their meat has a most unpleasant taste. Few shipwrecked sailors would turn it down, however.

DWARF CAIMAN

This lithe, green-scaled reptile looks like a miniature crocodile with a stunted muzzle.

Dwarf Caiman	CR 1/3	
XP 135		
N Small animal		
Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +0		
DEFENSE		
AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+3 natural, +1 size)		
hp 6 (1d8+2)		
Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0		
OFFENSE		
Speed 10 ft., swim 30 ft		
Melee bite +1 (1d4)		
STATISTICS		
Str 10, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 2		
Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 11		
Feats Sill Focus (Stealth)		
Skills Stealth +11 (+19 in water), Swim +8; Racial Traits +8		
Stealth in water		
Languages none		
ECOLOGY		
Environment warm water		
Organization solitary, pair, or bask (3-12)		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Hold Breath (Ex) A dwarf caiman can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 × its Constitution score before it risks drowning.		
Sprint (Ex) Once per minute, a dwarf caiman may sprint, increasing its land speed to 20 feet for 1 round.		




Dwarf caimans are a small species of crocodylian predators that live primarily amid the fast-running streams of tropical rainforests and nearby coastal waters. While

BESTIARY

hunting birds, lizards, fish, and other small prey, these patient predators sometimes lie in awkward positions for hours before they strike, their mottled scales making them appear to be nothing more than floating wood.

GIANT ISOPOD

This beetlelike crustacean is the size of a sewer rat; a row of overlapping plates protects it as it scuttles about on fourteen rapidly moving legs.




GIANT ISOPOD	CR 1/8	  
XP 50		
N Tiny vermin (aquatic)		
Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4		
DEFENSE		
AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (-1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size)		
hp 6 (1d8+2)		
Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +0		
Defensive Abilities curl; Immune mind-affecting effects		
OFFENSE		
Speed 20 ft., swim 10 ft.		
Melee bite -1 (1d3-3)		
STATISTICS		
Str 5, Dex 9, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2		
Base Atk +0; CMB -3; CMD 4 (28 vs. trip)		
Skills Perception +4, Swim +5; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any oceans		
Organization solitary		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		

Curl (Ex) As a standard action, a giant isopod can curl into a ball, increasing its natural armor bonus by +2 but preventing it from taking any move actions. Uncurling also requires a standard action.

Giant isopods are carnivorous scavengers that scour the ocean's floor. They vaguely resemble the common woodlouse in appearance, though they can grow to be up to 2-1/2 feet long and weigh nearly 4 pounds. Their unusual size and insectile appearance cause many humanoids to be wary of them, despite their relative harmlessness.

SEAL

This sleek, aquatic mammal has a pair of flippered limbs, a powerful tail, and a muzzle full of small sharp teeth.

SEAL	CR 1/3	  
XP 135		
N Small animal		
Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +5		
DEFENSE		
AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)		

SMALL AND VERMIN FAMILIARS

Some of these familiars break several of the rules and assumptions of the familiars presented in the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

Small-sized familiars threaten the areas around them like Small creatures, and can be used to flank enemies, though both familiars and their masters are often loath to use such tactics as the result is often a dead familiar. Small-sized familiars are also harder to keep on a master's person than Tiny or smaller familiars. Often they require some form of magic item, like a *bag of holding*, for such a feat to work.

The process of making a vermin into a familiar grants it an Intelligence score and removes the mindless trait.

Vermin familiars communicate with their masters and other vermin of their kind by way of a strange combination of behaviors, slight changes in coloration, and even the excretion of scents, subtle and otherwise. As with other types of familiars, other creatures cannot understand this communication without magical aid.

hp 4 (1d8)
Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1
OFFENSE
Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft.
Melee bite +2 (1d4)
STATISTICS
Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6
Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 10 (can't be tripped)
Skills Perception +5, Swim +8; Racial Modifiers +4 Perception
SQ hold breath
Languages none
ECOLOGY
Environment any oceans
Organization solitary, pair, rookery (3-24)
Treasure none
SPECIAL ABILITIES
Hold Breath (Ex) A seal can hold its breath for a number of minutes equal to 6 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Sleek-bodied aquatic mammals, seals spend the majority of their lives in the water, whether in the harbors of tropical ports or amid wandering icebergs. They prefer rocky beaches, upon which they rest, raise their young, and dive to hunt fish, squid, sea birds, and other small aquatic creatures. They are well known for their vocal communications consisting of barks, grunts, and flipper slaps, traits that cause many humanoids to remark on their intelligence and the ease with which they can be trained.



SEAS OF FORTUNE

The Free Captains of the Shackles have long menaced the sea lanes of the Arcadian Ocean off the western coast of Garund, striking fear in the hearts of merchant captains across the Inner Sea. No nation, however, has felt the sting of the pirate lords' lash more than Cheliox. In 4640 AR, Baron Grallus of Sargava, who had backed House Davian in the Chelish Civil War, turned to the Free Captains of the Shackles for help in defending the colony from House Thrune. Three years later, the Thrune imperial fleet suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the pirate lords, though the blow was not enough to extinguish Cheliox's ambitions. In 4660, the Chelish navy again sailed forth to reclaim Sargava, only to be driven into the Eye of Abendego by the Free Captains and dispersed. In the end, Baron Grallus's annual "stipend" to the Free Captains paid off.

House Thrune still longs for revenge against the pirates. Long has their anger brewed, but facing off against the Free Captains has been nothing but a dream for many years, as Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist has increased the reach and power of the pirate fleet beyond anything in its history.

Now, however, the Chelish navy's capture of Barnabas Harrigan, a Free Captain whose predations have taken a deep toll on the empire's merchant shipping, has given House Thrune a means to secure the pirate lords' annihilation. Rather than face execution, Harrigan offered Cheliox a deal they couldn't refuse—give him immunity for his past crimes and, utilizing his privileged knowledge of the Free Captains' inner workings, he will lead a Chelish fleet to the Shackles to put an end to the pirate confederacy once and for all. And once he has handed the Shackles over to Cheliox, Harrigan suggests, perhaps his overlords might appoint him governor of the new Chelish colony there.

GMs can find more information and tools in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles*, *Pathfinder Player Companion: Pirates of the Inner Sea*, the *Skull & Shackles Item Cards*, the *Skull & Shackles Poster Map Folio*, and the *Pathfinder Adventure Path: Skull & Shackles Player's Guide*, which is available for free at paizo.com.

THE WORMWOOD MUTINY

By Richard Pett

Pathfinder Adventure Path #55, Levels 1–3

When the PCs are press-ganged off the streets of the Shackles' Port Peril and wake up in a ship's hold, they find themselves unwilling crew members aboard the pirate ship *Wormwood*, under the ruthless command of Captain Barnabas Harrigan. The PCs need to think on their feet if they're going to survive among the cutthroat buccaneers who make up the *Wormwood's* crew, for if altercations with thugs aboard the ship don't do them in, the drinking and gambling stand a good chance of doing so. Even worse is their treatment under the scrutinizing eye of the ship's brutal taskmaster and boatswain, Master Scourge, who at every turn seeks to tarnish the PCs' image before the *Wormwood's* first mate, Mr. Plugg. Throughout it all, the PCs must try to get back those possessions confiscated from them when they were press-ganged.



When the *Wormwood* attacks the Rahadoumi merchant ship *Man's Promise*, the PCs find themselves charged with sailing the new ship back to Port Peril. Just as the PCs think it's the perfect time to stage a mutiny, a powerful storm arises and cripples the ship, grounding it on a small island. Mr. Plugg orders the PCs to go ashore and seek much-needed water and supplies, where the PCs encounter the undead victims of an earlier shipwreck and confront the grindylows that have abducted two missing crew members from the *Man's Promise*.

When the PCs return to the ship, the cruel Mr. Plugg decides it's time for him to get rid of the troublemakers under his command. After a fierce showdown with Plugg and those loyal to him, the PCs take control of the ship, at long last pirates in their own right.

RAIDERS OF THE FEVER SEA

By Greg A. Vaughan

Pathfinder Adventure Path #56, Levels 4–6

Having acquired their own ship, the PCs can now strike out as pirates themselves. As mutineers, however, the PCs can't simply sail into the Shackles. They have to prove themselves before the buccaneers of the Shackles will accept them as equals, by attacking merchant ships, raiding settlements, and squabbling with other pirates. First and foremost, however, the PCs must rechristen and refit their ship to conceal their mutiny.

While battling a rival pirate named Isabella "Inkskin" Locke, the PCs discover she has a treasure map tattooed on

CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

her body. The PCs follow the map to a small island, where they do battle with a group of sahuagin. Afterward, the PCs dig for the buried treasure shown on the map, which is really the entrance to a flooded dungeon. Exploring this dungeon, they confront its fearsome inhabitants and claim the map's treasure, finally gaining enough plunder and infamy to enter the Shackles as true Free Captains.

TEMPEST RISING

By Matthew Goodall

Pathfinder Adventure Path #57, Levels 7–8

To solidify their reputations, the PCs travel to the Shackles capital of Port Peril to present themselves to the Hurricane King and officially gain recognition as Free Captains. One of the leading pirate lords on the Pirate Council, Tessa Fairwind, takes an interest in the PCs. Impressed with their actions so far, Tessa invites them to join her fleet. She suspects Cheliox has designs on the Shackles, and asks the PCs to investigate. The PCs have the opportunity to explore Port Peril before embarking on their investigations in the Shackles.

Finally, the PCs must race their ship in the Free Captains' Regatta, an annual race along the fringes of the Eye of Abendego. In addition to facing treacherous weather, currents, reefs, and sandbars around the Eye, the PCs must also contend with hostile monsters, as well as their fiercest competitor, their old nemesis Captain Barnabas Harrigan. If the PCs can overcome these obstacles, they win lordship over a small island and a seat on the Pirate Council.

ISLAND OF EMPTY EYES

By Neil Spicer

Pathfinder Adventure Path #58, Levels 9–10

Having won the Free Captains' Regatta, the PCs must now claim their prize: the Island of Empty Eyes. The island is uninhabited and dangerous, and the PCs must explore it before they can build a port there, face the degenerate cyclopes inhabiting a ruin of ancient Ghol-Gan, then clear out the island's ruined fort and claim it as their own.

Once the PCs have settled into their new home, they have another duty to attend to—as newly minted pirate lords, they must host a feast for the leading pirates of the Shackles. Trouble assails the festivities when the PCs' archrival, Captain Harrigan, sends a mysterious agent called the Eel to sabotage the feast, and the PCs must stop the Eel's treachery and protect their powerful guests. If they fail, they will lose the respect of their guests as well as their status as Free Captains.

THE PRICE OF INFAMY

By Tim Hitchcock

Pathfinder Adventure Path #59, Levels 11–12

The PCs now have an island, but they'll need to attract other pirates to their flag to form a fleet. Once the PCs bring their

SPOILER WARNING!

What follows is the background and outline for the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path. If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! These pages spoil the upcoming adventures as thoroughly as possible.

new followers back to their island, their old rival Captain Barnabas Harrigan decides to get his revenge by attacking the PCs' island with his own fleet. The PCs must defend the island against Harrigan's pirates, culminating in a battle between the PC's ship and their old vessel, the *Wormwood*.

After defeating the enemy fleet, the PCs sail to Harrigan's island, intent on finally defeating their old foe. If they succeed, the PCs discover that Harrigan is a traitor who has sold out the Shackles to Cheliox in exchange for immunity for his crimes and a chance to rule what's left of the pirate isles. Worst of all, they learn a Chelish fleet is already on its way to the Shackles.

FROM HELL'S HEART

By Jason Nelson

Pathfinder Adventure Path #60, Levels 13–15

The threat of the approaching Chelish navy looms on the horizon, and the PCs must prepare for the defense of the Shackles. Hurricane King Kerdak Bonefist is unconcerned, believing the Shackles to be safe, so the PCs must use diplomacy, intimidation, and any other means necessary to gather more allies and build a fleet to repel the Chelians.

After readying their new fleet, the PCs sail north to engage the Chelish navy in an epic naval battle inside the Eye of Abendego, facing off against the Chelish flagship *Abrogail's Fury* and its defenders, including Chelish marines and summoned devils, as well as Admiral Druvalia Thrune and her Hellknight bodyguard.

If the PCs defeat the Chelish fleet, the plunder they have seized and the infamy they've accrued are enough that the Free Captains consider them capable successors to the Hurricane King. The PCs sail back to the Shackles to attack Port Peril, invading Fort Hazard in search of Kerdak Bonefist. After fighting through the Hurricane King's minions, the PCs find that Bonefist is not there. They must enter the sea caves below Fort Hazard, where a tribe of weresharks guards the Hurricane King's most prized treasures, and then face off against Bonefist and his flagship, the *Filthy Lucre*, one of only a few ships in the Shackles outfitted with cannons. With the defeat of the Hurricane King and his ship, and the acclaim of the Free Captains, the PCs can finally claim the Hurricane Crown of the Shackles for themselves.

NEXT MONTH

RAIDERS OF THE FEVER SEA

by Greg A. Vaughan

Now masters of their own ship, the PCs can become pirates in their own right, but they must first rename and refit their stolen ship. To be considered equals by the pirates of the Shackles, they'll have to prove themselves worthy of the name. When they discover a treasure map tattooed on a defeated pirate rival, the adventurers go in search of buried treasure—if they can find it, they'll have enough plunder to name themselves true Free Captains!

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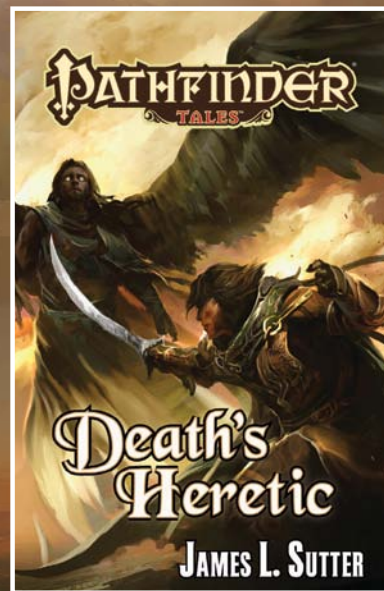
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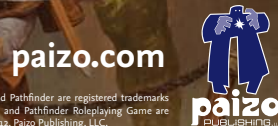
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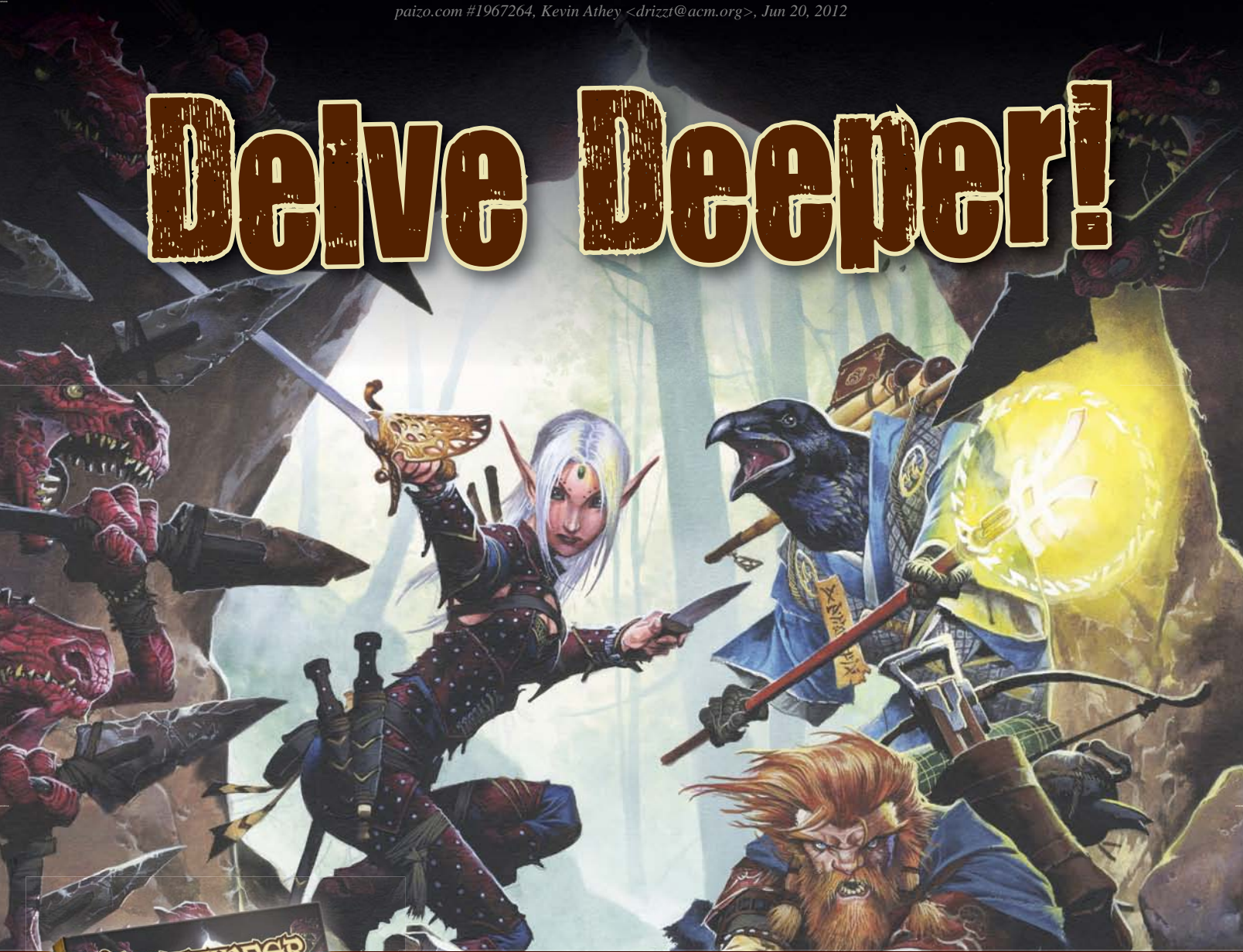
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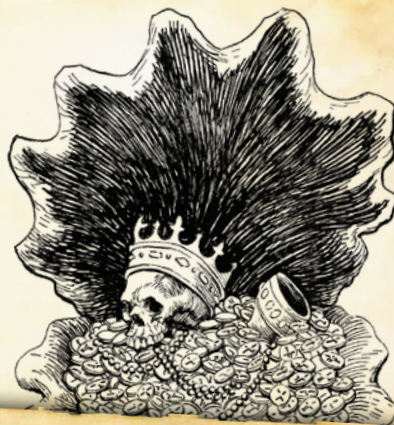


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The Buzzard's Bounty

They say not even the privateers of Rahadoum could keep the wily Captain Rorenet from hiding his plunder—no mean feat after those privateers sank the *Blue Buzzard* near Tempest Cay. Divers never found the *Buzzard's* booty, but legends tell that the giant clams of the Cay sometimes open to reveal more than just pearls.



Fisherman's Folly

Taproom tales never seem quite sure, but Chiminnie Ebbs either loved a mermaid or hated mermen so much that he saved for 20 years to have a wizard craft him a suit of armor that would allow him to walk beneath the waves. Ebbs walked into the waters of Drenchport one day and never came back. No one's ever cared enough to miss Ebbs, but if it worked, that armor sure would be something special.



Shipwreck in a Bottle

Poxy "Peg" Pearls always had a vicious sense of humor, and most who met her called her a witch, a bitch, or worse. Aside from bringing cabin boys to tears, she had a talent for crafting not just ships in bottles, but shipwrecks. Eventually, she was run out of Ollo after someone examining her work claimed to see gold spilling from one of her wrecks, along with a miniature crew desperately signaling for help.



The Lost Messenger

Although he started as a Taldan jeweler, Liat Murks eventually made a name for himself among the crew of the *Deprived*, who claimed the scrawny man could fix anything. By night he endlessly tinkered, eventually creating a shiny silver toucan of springs and cogs. One morning he loaded the metal bird with a rescue plea and set it loose. But so convincing was the device—even to itself—that it flew into the jungles near Mgange Cove and was never seen again.

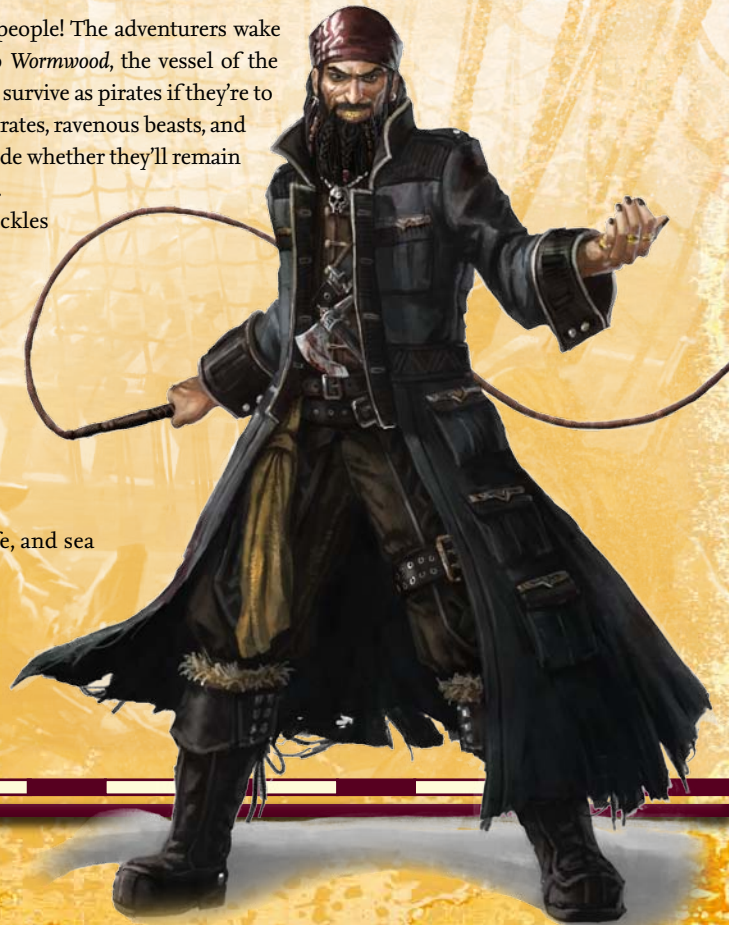


CAPTIVES OF FORTUNE

Pirates take whatever they please, whether it be ships, plunder, or people! The adventurers wake to find themselves press-ganged into the crew of the pirate ship *Wormwood*, the vessel of the nefarious Captain Barnabus Harrigan. They'll have to learn how to survive as pirates if they're to have any hope of weathering rough waves, brutal crew members, enemy pirates, ravenous beasts, and worse. But when fortune turns to their favor, it's up to the new crew to decide whether they'll remain the pirate's swabs or seize control and set sail for adventures all their own.

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* launches the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path and includes:

- "The Wormwood Mutiny," a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 1st-level characters, by Richard Pett.
- Details of life aboard a pirate vessel and rules for becoming the most infamous scallywag to sail the seas, by Jesse Benner, Richard Pett, and F. Wesley Schneider.
- Revelations on the daring faith of Besmara, goddess of pirates, strife, and sea monsters, by Sean K Reynolds.
- Death and plunder in the Pathfinder's Journal, by Robin D. Laws.
- Four new monsters, by Jesse Benner, Sean K Reynolds, and Steven D. Russell



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